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March 1956

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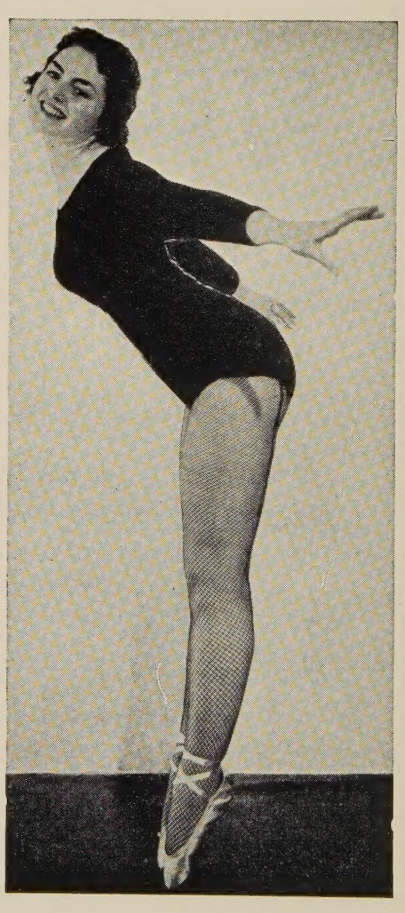

Personality of the month

Margaret Dale

Photo: John Hart

MARGARET DALE'S first appearance with the Sadler's Wells Ballet was in a ballet based on the Hans Andersen story *The Emperor's New Clothes*, playing the realistic child who points out that the King was, as the Danny Kaye version of the story puts it, "in the altogether." Perhaps this role was significant, for now 18 years later, having left Sadler's Wells, she is applying the same clearsightedness to her tasks as a BBC Television producer.

Dale is the first producer of television ballet to have achieved fame as a dancer. Born in Newcastle she joined the Sadler's Wells School in 1937, and graduated into the company just before the outbreak of war. Her career was distinguished; a fine comedy dancer, she was admirable in *A Wedding Bouquet* and *Ballabile*, and she had that unusual ability to make even the smallest roles, such as the Page in *Hamlet* or the American Child in *La Boutique Fantasque*, memorable. One of her outstanding achievements as a dancer was her lively interpretation of Swanilda, which she danced for the first time at Covent Garden in 1946.

Her first choreography was for television, but in 1954 she produced her first stage ballet, *The Great Detective*. The failure of this was perhaps a set-back to her career, yet she persevered with television, and eventually took the BBC's Television Producers' Course. Now a fully-fledged producer, her first assignments have been remarkable for their imagination and taste. Here is someone who sees television ballet as a fresh medium and not as a substitute for the live theatre. Probably other producers have also felt this, and in some instances have been moderately successful, but only Dale has the experience and knowledge that was apparently required to put that fairly obvious precept into practice.

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March 1956 Vol. 7 No. 3

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS
Assistant Editor: CLIVE A. BARNES

WORLD'S LARGEST NET SALE IN THE FIELD

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Genius and Craftsmanship

A UNIQUE director of a company and personality of the dance recently paid a moving tribute to a great ballerina across the space of 25 years. Dame Ninette de Valois' speech from the stage of the Stoll Theatre during the gala performance held there on January 23 to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Anna Pavlova affectingly summed up the feelings of those in the audience who had experienced Pavlova's artistry. Her words are of wide-spread importance to ballet in general and should serve as an inspiration to the dancers of to-day. Here are the notes which formed the basis of her speech:

"We are gathered here tonight to honour a goddess of the dance. This audience consists of those who knew the art of Pavlova and those who only knew her as a name . . . I would like to address my tribute to those of the younger generation, for the poverty of my words will not do anything to conjure up a picture of Pavlova to those who can remember for themselves.

"Often I am asked, 'What was Pavolva like?' What can one say?—perhaps Cecchetti had the nearest answer for it when he said that 'Pavlova spells genius and you cannot explain genius.'

"Yes, she had genius—she was lit with a strange inner flame—a flame that reached everyone. Pavlova was a dedicated soul; she knew of no life divorced from the dance. For her, to dance was a mission—it was life itself.

Perfection of detail

"As a student, she taught me one unforgettable lesson—her craftsmanship in the theatre. If only the young of to-day could see her, for the perfection of detail which ruled her performance. Hers was a craftsmanship as subtle and penetrating as the talent which it served.

"People would sometimes speak of the banal side of her dances, her costumes and her music. But she could fearlessly turn the banal into poetry through the refinement of her artist's soul.

"I do not think for one moment that anyone with her love and understanding of life and movement, her brave and challenging spirit, would want this evening's performance to hold a note of sadness. She thought it perfectly natural to live her life dancing; she would think it perfectly natural that tonight we should remember her and express our love and gratitude by just—dancing.

"So let us remove this proscenium and with one gesture unite the past with the present and let us at the Court of Terpsichore pay homage to one of her most illustrious nymphs.

"Let us take this opportunity to fulfil the following:

1. That we will endeavour to keep the ballet on the lofty pinnacle it has reached today.
2. That we will remember the part played by Anna Pavlova in the pioneer work.
3. That we say from the fullness of our hearts: We thank you, Anna Pavlova, in the name of ballet—from all the four corners of the world."

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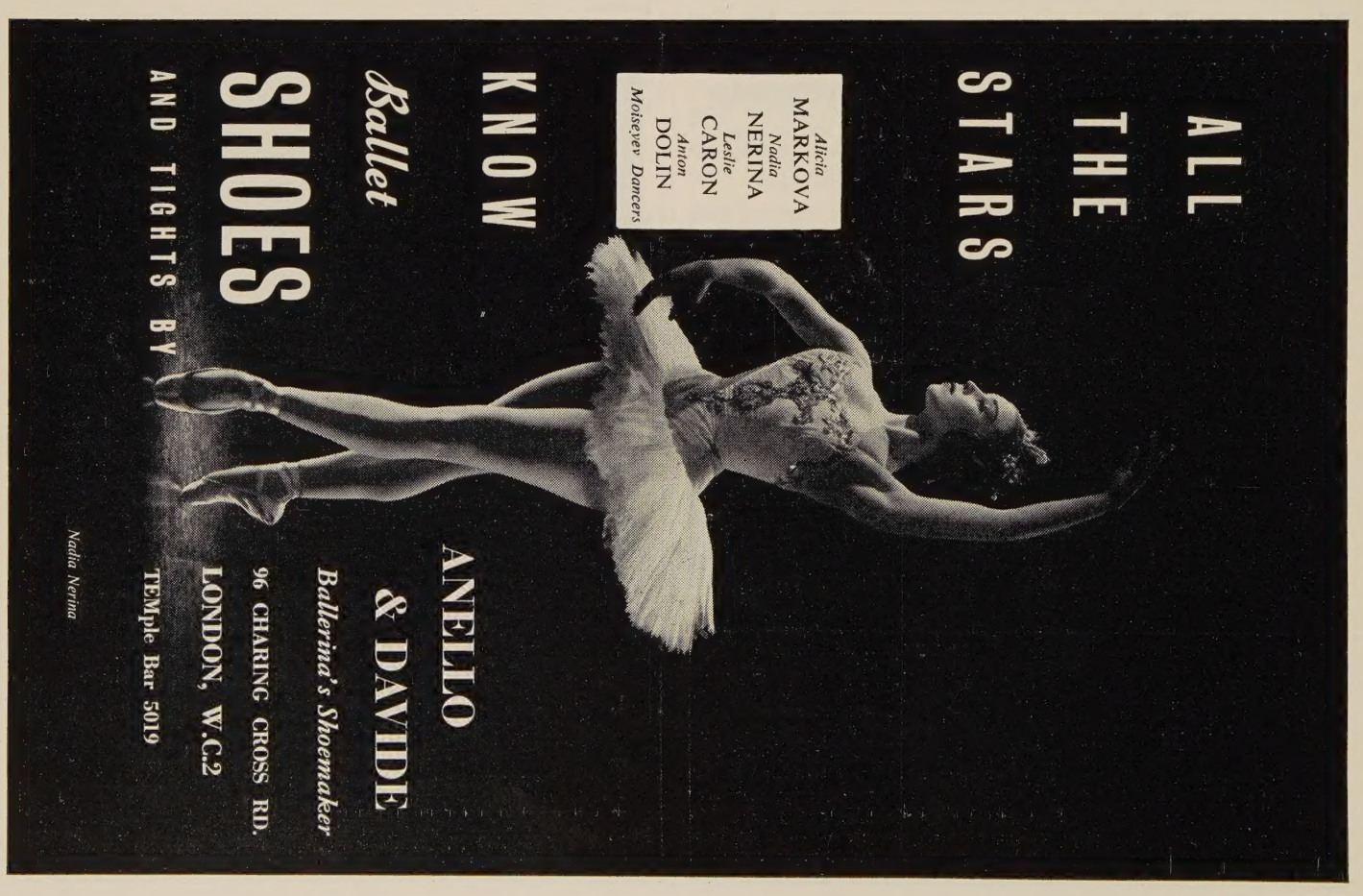


LAST MINUTE DISCUSSION: *One of the conductors, Leighton Lucas (the other two were Robert Irving and Geoffrey Corbett) is given final instructions from the organisers—Cyril W. Beaumont and Doris Barry.*

BOUQUETS AND BALLERINAS: *Dame Ninette de Valois surrounded by some of the ballerinas who danced at the Pavlova Commemoration Midnight Matinee—Marianne Orlando, Margot Fonteyn, Dame Ninette, Alicia Markova and Elsa Marianne von Rosen.* *Photos: Paul Wilson*

Homage at Midnight

To pay tribute to the memory of Anna Pavlova, twenty-five years after her death, dancers from all over the world gathered at the Stoll Theatre, London, on January 23 (the anniversary of Pavlova's death) to dance at a special midnight performance.

JUST as we do not criticise the size or quality of wreaths laid on the graves of great people, so it is not possible to apply ordinary criticism to the performances of the many artists who, from the far corners of the earth, came to pay homage to the memory of Anna Pavlova in a midnight matinee at the Stoll Theatre, London, on January 23.

All artists, many of whom had to come from overseas, gave their services and each contribution represented what each of them felt to be most fitting to the occasion. No ballerina in the whole history of ballet has inspired so many international stars to gather on one stage to honour her—25 years after her death. It says a lot for the respect which the whole dancing profession has for Anna Pavlova, that such a performance was possible.

Framed by the Oriental proscenium, a permanent feature of *Kismet* (the current musical at the Stoll Theatre), the ballets and divertissements did not seem too out of place. In fact the three arches, one large flanked by two smaller ones, gave a frame which, in the case of the Grand Divertissement, seemed strangely apt.

The Sadler's Wells Ballet with *Les Sylphides* and two scenes from Ashton's *Homage to the Queen* formed the bread of the sandwich: the filling was succulently composed of a variety of offerings by international artists.

Les Sylphides, with Grey, Chatfield and Beriosova was followed by a moving and eloquent spoken tribute to Pavlova's art by Dame Ninette de Valois. The curtain rose upon a stage empty except for the 'cellist, Christopher Bunting, who played Saint Saens' *Le Cygne*. The beauty of his playing evoked Pavlova more than any attempt to dance the solo in her name, or the cheap effect of spotlighting an imaginary "ghost," could ever have done.

Divertissement from six countries

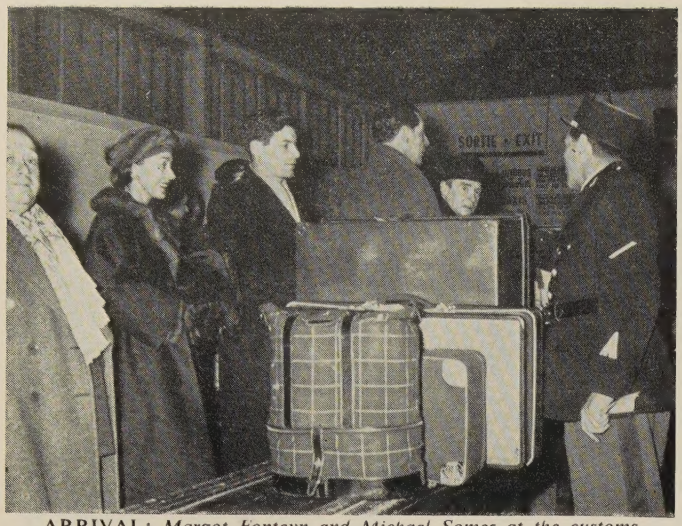
After a short interval came a divertissement of varied dances from many lands. From Sweden, Mariane Orlando and Kenneth Petersen showed a *pas de deux* from Culberg's version of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. Also from Sweden came Elsa Marianne von Rosen in *La Lithuanienne* (originally created by Lefebvre for Augusta Nielsen in 1845) and Bjorn Holmgren in *Largo al factotum* by Maurice Béjart. From India, Ram Gopal gave two of his most famous Kathakali excerpts—*Lord Siva's Dance to the Setting Sun* and *The Golden Eagle*. Denmark was represented by Toni Lander in the *pas de deux* from Bournonville's *Flower Festival at Genzano* (now used in Festival Ballet's *Napoli*) which she danced with British John Gilpin. From France, Yvette Chauviré danced a bravura variation from Gsovsky's *Grand Pas Classique*. From America, Marjorie Tallchief danced the sleep-walker in the *pas de deux* from Balanchine's *Night Shadow* with George Skibine. From Britain, the South Africans Nadia Nerina and Alexis Rassine performed the *Don Quixote pas de deux*; and finally there was Markova in Ricarda's *Bolero* 1830.

The last part of the programme consisted of Elvin, Ashbridge and Shaw in the *Water* scene from Ashton's *Homage to the Queen*, followed by Fonteyn and Somes in the *Air* scene. At the end Dolin thanked the artists who had taken part and the curtain rose on all the whole company.

Such gala performances can be a bore but the whole of this evening, mainly owing to the way it was arranged, was as enjoyable in itself as it was a moving tribute to Pavlova from the most famous dancers of the world. Much of this was due to the work of Rita Glynde and Cyril Beaumont of the Pavlova Commemoration Committee, Sandor Gorlinsky who managed the performance and Doris Barry (Markova's sister) who acted as stage manager and put the whole show through slickly and without any noticeable hitch—no small feat when the rehearsal period had been limited to three hours.

To consolidate such varied talents and dances into a homogeneous programme might have seemed an almost impossible feat. In actual fact the content and order of each item was such that each artist showed off the other to the best possible advantage to all concerned.

AIR HER ELEMENT: *Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes with the Sadler's Wells Ballet in the* Air *section of Ashton's* Homage to the Queen *which finished the programme. The setting is that used for* Kismet. *Photo: Paul Wilson*



ARRIVAL: *Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes at the customs shed at Nice airport when they arrived to dance with Festival Ballet in Monte Carlo on January* 13. *Julian Braunsweg, Festival Ballet's director, on left.* *Photo: Lido*

REHEARSAL: *Shortly after their arrival, Fonteyn and Somes rehearsed* Swan Lake *on the stage of the Théatre de Monte Carlo. They are seen talking to Grigorieff, Festival Ballet's regisseur.* *Photo: Lido*

RECEPTION: *After the performance of* Swan Lake *on January* 14, *Somes, Braunsweg and Fonteyn were received by Princess Antoinette of Monaco in her box.* *Photo: Oggero*

FONTEYN in Monte Carlo

SO much praise is justly lavished upon Fonteyn's performances in the theatre and the papers are so full of talk about her being "Britain's great ballet ambassadress" that it is quite often forgotten what has gone on behind the performance and what the word "ambassadress" really implies.

Fonteyn's visit to Monte Carlo, with Michael Somes, to appear with Festival Ballet was a typical example of how a great ballerina is far more than just a great dancer. It is her attitude towards her art and her fellow artists that plays so important a part in the shaping of the ballerina as a whole.

On January 12, Fonteyn and Somes danced the principal roles in Ashton's *Cinderella* at Covent Garden. These are not light roles and the ballerina role in particular is very exhausting. Nevertheless by 9.30 the following morning, they were both at London Airport to welcome Fonteyn's husband, Dr. Arias, who was due back from America. His plane was delayed so there was nothing left but to set off for Nice without him. This in itself was slightly disquieting, added to which, their own flight was rather bumpy after Paris (nobody mentioned that it happened to be Friday the thirteenth). The weather in Nice was damp and a gale blew across the airstrip.

On their arrival in Monte Carlo, there was a press reception at the Hôtel de Paris, during which Fonteyn had to look appropriately radiant for a television film, talk in French on the radio and be interviewed by various newspapers. All of this she accomplished with friendly ease and natural grace. One hour later she was rehearsing in the theatre with a company, an orchestra and conductor she did not know on a stage new to her, and, in the case of one ballet, with a new partner.

The rehearsal of the three scheduled works—*Swan Lake* Act 2, *Les Sylphides* and the *Sylvia pas de deux*—went on until nearly one o'clock in the morning. It will be seen from all this that Fonteyn had had a day which even the strongest of us would find tiring. But it was in this rehearsal that she showed her true mettle—she never tired and when some of the *tempi* differed from those to which she was accustomed, she was never satisfied until she had either altered her own performance to the new speed or, as in the case of the *Sylvia pas de deux*, until she had helped Geoffrey Corbett adjust the *tempi* to those favoured at Covent Garden. So much stopping and retracing of dance passages is exhausting; occasionally it can be very irritating and lead to shortening of tempers. Never was there any suggestion that this would happen with Fonteyn; her sense of humour came to the rescue.

Odette at close range

Next morning she was in the studio by 10.30, watching the boys' class which Somes was taking; at 11 she was taking class herself with the girls. After that she rehearsed parts of *Les Sylphides* with Gilpin. By the afternoon, Dr. Arias had at last arrived in Monte Carlo, his plane having been held up by fog. That evening Fonteyn gave a splendid Odette, with Somes as Siegfried, in the Festival Ballet *Swan Lake*. It was possible to see at closer range than is the case at Covent Garden the wonderful subtlety of her interpretation—the tremors of fear at her first encounter with the Prince and the gradual awakening of her love. In this performance, as also in the rehearsal and at class, one was brought face to face with the miracle of Fonteyn's perfect line, her inability to make an unharmonious movement. The two guest artists were justly accorded a great ovation by the traditionally undemonstrative Monte Carlo audience. Later in the evening, Mr. Onassis, the wealthy ship-owner, gave a party at the Cabaret of the Casino for the guests and principal dancers of Festival Ballet; a party which did not break up until around three in the morning.

The following afternoon Fonteyn danced in *Les Sylphides* at a matinee performance when she was excellently partnered by John Gilpin, the two dancing as though they had been partners for years. Later in the programme she gave, with Michael Somes, the fine *pas de deux* from the last act of Ashton's *Sylvia*. Thus the Monte Carlo audience had a chance of seeing three different facets of Fonteyn's art and she captivated them as she has a vast audience all over the world.

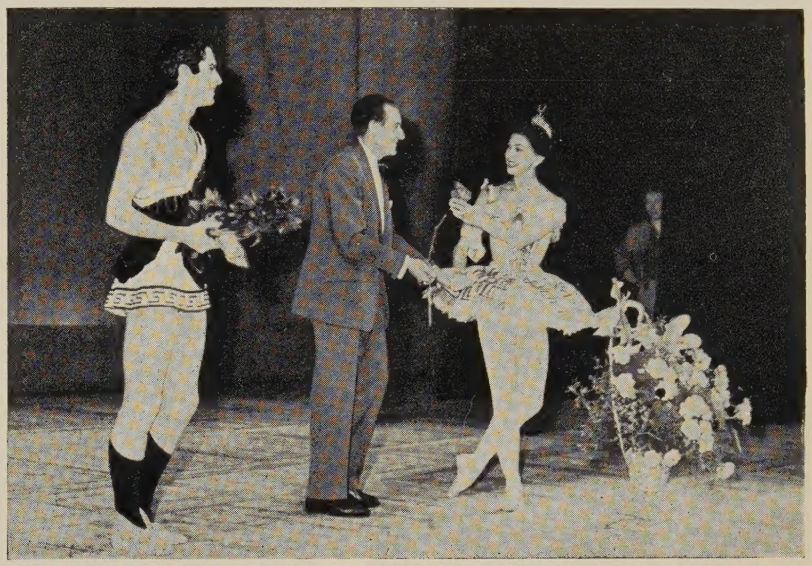
Immediately after this performance, Fonteyn, Somes and members of the company went to the villa of Princess Antoinette of Monaco for a delightful informal party at which Fonteyn discussed with seriousness the art of ballet with the small children of Princess Antoinette. The Princess, as great a diplomat as Fonteyn, persuaded the ballerina to make a return visit the following week-end to dance in aid of the Red Cross. Fonteyn, who by then had taken Monte Carlo as much to her heart as it had been charmed by her, needed little persuasion. This party was followed by a small dinner party, for principal members of the company given by Fonteyn on Mr. Onassis' yacht, which broke up at about 2 p.m. The following morning she was up early packing her costumes in the theatre—then she flew away.

She left behind, with her fellow artists and with all of whom she came in contact, an indelible impression of a very great dancer and an equally fine person who can only serve her country and her art in the highest possible way wherever she appears. **P.W.**

NEW PARTNER: *Fonteyn dancing with John Gilpin for the first time in the* pas de deux *in Festival Ballet's* Les Sylphides *in Monte Carlo on January* 15. *Photo: Oggero*

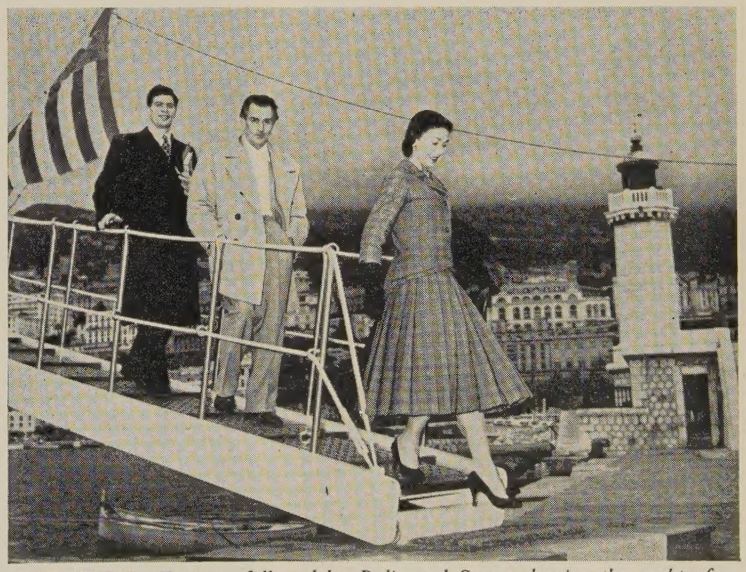
RELAXATION: *Coffee in the sun on the terrace of the Café de Paris in Monte Carlo. Seated are Flemming Flindt, Anton Dolin, Margot Fonteyn and Toni Lander, with John Gilpin and Michael Somes standing behind. Photo: Lido*

LIFT IN *SYLVIA*: *Fonteyn and Somes, from the wings, in the* pas de deux *from the last act of Ashton's* Sylvia *which they gave on January* 15 *in Monte Carlo.*



FLORAL TRIBUTES: *Fonteyn and Somes were both presented with flowers during the ovation after the* Sylvia pas de deux. *Fonteyn gives a flower from one of her bouquets to Festival Ballet's artistic director—Anton Dolin. Photos: Oggero*

WALK IN THE SUN: *Somes, Fonteyn and Dr. Roberto de Arias, Fonteyn's husband and Panamanian Ambassador in London, arrive at the Casino to pack for their return to London.*



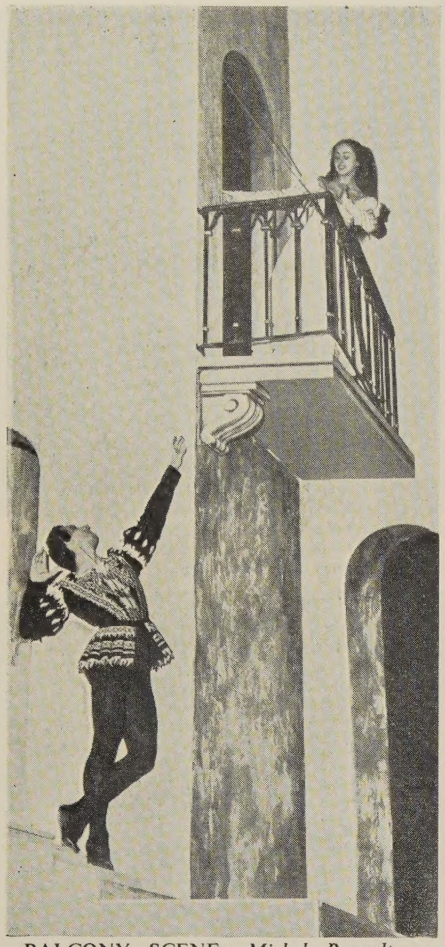
FAREWELL: *Fonteyn, followed by Dolin and Somes, leaving the yacht of ship-owner Onassis in Monaco harbour, on which Fonteyn and Somes stayed during their visit to Monte Carlo. Photos: Lido*

ROMEO ET JULIETTE

Ballet in two Acts and 10 episodes by Prokofiev and Lavrovsky, after Shakespeare. New version by Serge Lifar. Sets and costumes by Georges Wakhevitch. Production and choreography by Serge Lifar. First performed at the Paris Opéra, December 28, 1955.

Juliet	LIANE DAYDÉ
Romeo	MICHEL RENAULT
Friar Laurence	SERGE LIFAR
Tybalt	MAX BOZZONI
Paris	JEAN-PAUL ANDRÉANI
Mercutio	RAOUL BARI
Juliet's Nurse	PAULETTE DYNALIX
Benvolio	RAYMOND FRANCHETTI
Juliet's Mother	RITA THALIA
Juliet's Father	M. BLANC
The Duke	M. PARRÈS

Photographed by Serge Lido



BALCONY SCENE: *Michel Renault as Romeo and Liane Daydé as Juliet in the new version of Prokofiev's* Romeo and Juliet, *recently given at the Paris Opera.*

CREATED in Leningrad 15 years ago in 1940; *Romeo and Juliet* is to-day danced in many parts of the world, and the Paris Opera, by adding this imposing work to its repertory, has rendered a further tribute to Serge Prokofiev.

Concerned with retaining the intensity and speed of the action, Serge Lifar has condensed the ballet, keeping only the essential scenes. Out of three Acts and 10 scenes, he has made two Acts and 10 episodes. Two simultaneous sets enable the curtain to be lowered only once on the immense stage, transformed into the town of Verona, and evoking the frescoes of Giotto and Fra Angelico.

An animated fresco

Serge Prokofiev began his score in 1925, on a commission from the Soviet Government; his temperament would no doubt not have suggested this lyrical theme. He took more than five years to finish it and introduced into it fragments of earlier works notably the gavotte from the *Classical Symphony* which is heard during the Capulets' ball. The score, therefore, lacks the consistency of invention and the cohesion of many of his other works. Even in the abbreviated version given at the Opéra, in which the most wonderful passages have been retained, there are several weaker patches. The combat scenes and the *adages* are, nevertheless, incomparably brilliant.

A vast animated fresco, this latest ballet by Lifar smoothly intermingles *ensembles* with *variations*, *pas de deux* and *pas de trois*, which are its peaks. Shakespeare's tragedy is too well known for the ballet not to appear in some manner a superfluous plastic illustration of it, but if certain "pages" of the ballet can be turned over quickly, there are others which will long leave their charm on the spectator.

The Montague-Capulet rivalry is rapidly sketched, as are the characters of the two heroes. While Romeo exchanges confidences with Benvolio and Mercutio in terms of manly bounds, Juliet, in the company of her nurse, still plays as a child, performing tentative *arabesques*.

The Capulet's ball contains the finest passages: the astonishing *variation* for Paris, the comic *pas de trios* by Romeo and his two companions, and the meeting of the two lovers.

Youthful passion and purity

The famous balcony scene has inspired Lifar to compose one of his loveliest and most original *adages* in a work which has many sustained *arabesques*, romantic or neo-classical. Lifts and ingenious *equilibres* translate happily the youthful passion and the purity of the lovers of Verona. Lifar has also noted the burst of naive joy with which Romeo expresses the pride and happiness of this first love.

A charming serenade, the intervention of Friar Laurence and the secret marriage lead rapidly to the tragic quarrels of Mercutio and Tybalt, whom Romeo tries in vain to separate and calm. Seeing his friend fall, he attacks his assailant with sword and then dagger, killing him. This fight does not match up to the perfection of those in *Le Chevalier et la Demoiselle*, but it terminates the first part of the ballet on an exciting note.

Unconvincing ending

The second Act is less successful. It begins with a very fine *adage* of farewell, and then follow the final episodes: Paris's proposal of marriage, the visit to Friar Laurence, the poisoning, the funeral procession, the duel between Romeo and Paris ending in the latter's death, the death of Romeo to be soon followed by that of Juliet. The music is at times languishing, and the choreography suffers because of a set which lacks solidity and is not very convincing.

Liane Daydé portrays Juliet with naive freshness. She has the heroine's fragile youthfulness, and as her nervousness vanished, so, at the first performance, did her acting become more moving. She seems to make light of technical difficulties. Michel Renault also warmed up to his part, adding passion and feeling to Romeo's carefree joy. These two made a graceful couple, radiating the spirit of youth. Jean-Paul Andreani showed

LOVE SCENE:

Renault and Daydé in the pas de deux *which is reported to be one of the loveliest and most original* adages *created by Serge Lifar in recent years This version of the ballet was considerably cut and condensed.*

off his astonishing technique as usual, and Raoul Bari distinguished himself in the role of Mercutio. Serge Lifar brought his stage presence to his interpretation of Friar Laurence by the play of arms and features alone. The role of the Nurse was mimed with spontaneity by Paulette Dynalix.

Of Wakhevitch's two sets, the first limits the stage area a little, the second leaves it too bare. Greatly inspired by the *Quattrocento*, they are insufficiently realistic to convince, but add brilliance to the sumptuous and luminous costumes, which one can criticise only for the absence of any distinguishing marks to identify the members of the rival houses. The design of the nightdresses of Juliet's friends could also have been improved. There is one original idea worthy of special note: in the niches which frame the stage, monks, courtiers and pages appear in turn.

Marie-Françoise Christout

Popular Theme

SHAKESPEARE'S play, *Romeo and Juliet*, has, in the past few years, become one of the most popular themes for ballet. One can only assume that this is because of its strong love interest, as otherwise the interest is mainly in the poetry.

In addition to this present Lifar version using Prokofiev's score, the version given by the ballet of the Zagreb Opera with choreography by Margareta Froman, and Frederick Ashton's staging of the same work for the Royal Danish Ballet, are the best known outside Russia.

London has an opportunity at the present moment of seeing the full-length ballet with Galina Ulanova as Juliet in the Russian film which is being shown at the Royal Festival Hall at the end of March and beginning of April. Everybody who can, should make a point of seeing this first full-length ballet film which will be discussed in our next issue.

Another long version of *Romeo and Juliet*, this time with music by Berlioz, was given last year by Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas in the open air in Paris. This had choreography by several choreographers.

But the theme has also been used for many notable shorter works, the most successful being by Serge Lifar, Birgir Bartholin and George Skibine, all of which use Tchaikovsky's fantasy overture of the same name. Of these shorter ballets it was possibly Antony Tudor's ballet, with Delius music, which realised most fully the drama and poetic feeling of the play.

STREET SCENE: *Montagues and Capulets brawl in the streets of Verona. The full stage setting of Lifar's version of Prokofiev's* Romeo et Juliette *at the Paris Opera.*

FATEFUL MEETING: *Romeo, Michel Renault, meets Juliet, Liane Daydé, at the Capulet's ball. As members of opposing houses, their instant love brings about eventual tragedy*

Printing Dispute

WE apologise to our readers that owing to circumstances arising out of the printers' dispute, which has put many periodicals printed in London temporarily out of action, this March issue is smaller than usual and over a month late.

We are making up for lost time and the April issue of DANCE AND DANCERS will be published in a fortnight's time. This will also be a smaller issue. By the May number, however, we hope to be back to normal and a new large issue, with more articles and more pictures than ever before, will be published on April 20.

We should like to thank all those readers who have expressed sympathy and shown such understanding about the enforced delay in publishing the magazine.

THE NEXT NUMBER

The April number of DANCE AND DANCERS, on sale in the first week of April, will contain:

Pictures and opinion of Frederick Ashton's LA PERI and Kenneth Macmillan's NOCTAMBULES, both for the Sadler's Wells Ballet; the new version of COPPELIA for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

Ballet in Italy today **by UGO DELL'ARA.** *Forming a Negro Dance Theatre* **by AUBREY HITCHENS.** *Anything Goes*, **a review of the dancing in the new film with Renée Jeanmaire, by CLAYTON COLE.** *New Records* **by DAVID HUNT;** *Ballet on Television* **by E. C. MASON; News from France by MARIE-FRANCOISE CHRISTOUT; News from America by ARTHUR TODD. Many topical features.**

A YOUNG MAN DIES: *Veronika Mlakar, as the girl, with the body of the young man, Buzz Miller. The scene above is the reconstruction of the crime as the police inspector imagines it. The scene below shows the actual discovery of the crime* *Photos: Serge Lido*

VIOLENCE AND DRAMA: *Miller and Mlakar in the strong* pas de deux *which is an important feature of this new dramatic work by Roland Petit based on an idea of Georges Simenon. The realistic setting is the first work for ballet by the well-known painter, Bernard Buffet.*

LA CHAMBRE

Ballet by Georges Simenon. Music by Georges Auric. Scenery and costumes by Bernard Buffet. Choreography by Roland Petit. First given at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées on December 20, 1955.

VERONIKA MLAKAR BUZZ MILLER
and
YVES GUMBELLE, CHRISTIANE HUBERT, BÉATRICE MOSENA, FRITZ HESS, GÉRARD LEMAÎTRE, VINCENTE NEBRADA, RAY POINTER

EVEN before it was shown to the public, *La Chambre* had excited that swirl of feeling which accompanies great successes and shattering failures. The unexpected collaboration of a writer of detective stories such as Simenon and one of the most celebrated and most pessimistic painters of the contemporary school, Bernard Buffet, with Roland Petit, choreographer of *Carmen* and *Le Loup*, and Georges Auric, composer of *Phedre*, seemed a daring bid for the highest stakes. And the elegant and *blasé* first-night public broke out into wild applause.

Once again Roland Petit has succeeded as a man of the theatre, co-ordinator of various talents, and choreographer. He has been able to bring together the set and the music with a coherence and rhythm of movement which suits the original scenario.

Influenced by the anecdotal realism of certain American ballets, he has stylised this realism, made it choreographic, a work of art rather than a hotchpotch.

The important element in a detective story is the suspense, and *La Chambre* is above all built on suspense. It is a very short work, compactly condensed, strange and violent, and its construction recalls *Le Jeune homme et la mort*, although the atmosphere is very different.

In a sordid, grey-walled room, a man has just died. The body is found. Witnesses and policemen crowd on to the stage in a short scene more mimed than danced. Then the police inspector is left alone and begins to reconstruct the crime. How the natural and fantastic intermingle, how the climax becomes confused with the beginning is something that only Simenon and Roland Petit can imagine.

Such a ballet asks much of its interpreters: technique, authority, and above all stage presence. Neither Buzz Miller nor Veronika Mlakar lack these. And the violent and dramatic *pas de deux* which forms the principal part of the work, enables them to display gifts which Paris had not known before. Georges Auric's score is danceable and well written, and the set by Bernard Buffet as sordid as one could wish. It is an original, concise, unexpected work.

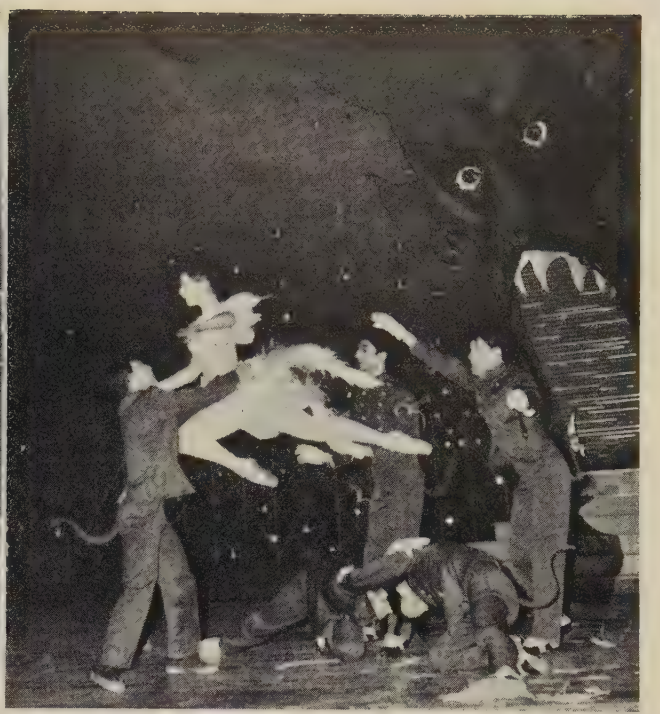
Marie-Francoise Christout

COVER PICTURE

This month's cover by Serge Lido shows two stars of two British ballet companies dancing together for the first time.

When Margot Fonteyn, prima ballerina assoluta of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, went to Monte Carlo recently, she danced in Fokine's *Les Sylphides* with John Gilpin, principal male dancer of Festival Ballet. This is the first picture of a unique occasion.

LADIES INTO SHE-DEVILS: *Beautiful girls of Ballet de Paris* corps de ballet *become, for a short while, transformed into she-devils in hell, a state which nobody seems to object to overmuch*



IN THE CAULDRON; *The fun gets fast and furious as Tessa Beaumont (centre) is whirled about by a group of horned male devils. The colourful designs are by Tom Keogh who was responsible for* Don Quichotte *and* Tyl Eulenspiegel *for Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées*

LES BELLES DAMNÉES

Ballet by Roland Petit. Music by Michel Legrand on themes by Jean-Michel Damase. Set and costumes by Tom Keogh. Choreography by Roland Petit. First given at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées on December 20, 1955.

TESSA BEAUMONT BUZZ MILLER
ANDREE LELIEVRE JOSÉ FERRAN RINO ADIPIETRO
and
NICOLE CRUCIANI, YVE GUMBELLE, CHRISTIANE HUBERT, BEATRICE MOSENA, CORINA REICHEL, MONIQUE VENCE, ALFONSO CATA, FRITZ HESS, GÉRARD LEMAÎTRE, RAY POINTER

IF one had to compare *Les Belles Damnées* with another ballet by Roland Petit, one would perhaps place it alongside *L'Oeuf à la Coque*. A pocket fantasy, it only sets out to amuse by the burlesque comedy of its plot, movements and costumes. Roland Petit knows the recipe of this burlesque style, of which Jerome Robbins has shown himself to be the master.

A cohort of beautiful sinners, clad in night-dresses, with handbags on their arms, file past an assembly of horned devils. Precipitated straight from their pavements into the jaws of Hell, these ladies strike some characteristic attitudes, and a short spell in the cauldron transforms them into elegant she-devils.

A lively rhythm pervades the work. Witty facets abound. Andrée Lelièvre in particular gives proof of a real comic talent. Buzz Miller reveals himself as a character dancer of easy style and droll spontaneity. He commands his infernal battalion with easy grace, and sanctimoniously allows himself to be charmed by the beautiful and plumed Tessa Beaumont. One should seek no more in this *divertissement* than the amusement it frankly sets out to provide. Michel Legrand's music is somewhat facile. The sets and costumes by Tom Keogh are extremely original and of a highly coloured comic quality.

Petit works revived

AS well as the creations, *La Chambre* and *Les Belles Damnées*, mounted for the *Paris season*, *Deuil en* 24 *heures* and *Le Loup* have been successfully revived. The former has suffered a little as a result of changes in casting, for Hélèn Constantine lacks Colette Marchand's piquant authority and José Ferran and Ray Pointer, excellent as they are, do not obliterate the memory of Serge Perrault and Jean-Bernard Lemoine.

On the other hand, *Le Loup* is still the masterpiece it originally was. The theme, the music, and Carzou's set have retained their mysterious atmosphere and attraction. Roland Petit is as ever a noble and wild beast, but has added a certain touch of savagery. Violette Verdy is fragile and charming as the young girl but is still a little cold. In her absence the role was taken over at short notice by Veronika Mlakar, who showed another aspect of her talent, a pure style and a simplicity which *La Chambre* had not till then allowed her to reveal.

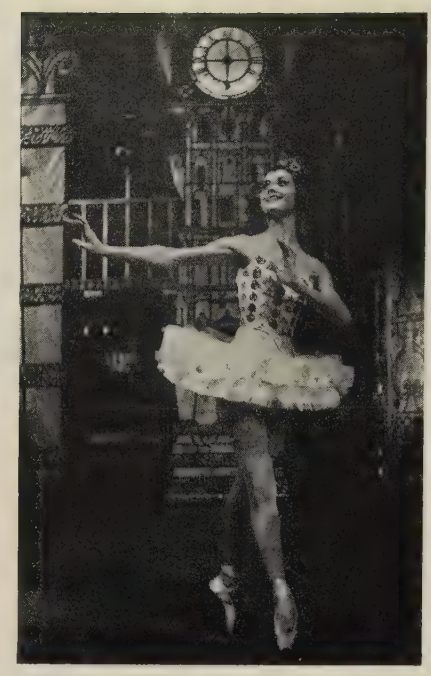
Marie-Françoise Christout

THE ballets mentioned on this and the previous page will be seen in London, when Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris opens a four-week season at the Palace Theatre on May 8.

In addition, Renée Jeanmaire will reappear in the title role of Petit's ballet version of Bizet's *Carmen*. This work was originally created in London, at Princes Theatre, in 1949, when it caused a sensation for its remarkable sense of drama, its glowing decor by Clavé and for the brilliant interpretation of the title role by Jeanmaire. Since then, both the ballet and Jeanmaire herself have enjoyed international fame.

DEVILS TOGETHER: *Tessa Beaumont and Buzz Miller in a* pas de deux. *Buzz Miller will be remembered by British audiences when he appeared in cabaret some years ago with Kay Thompson; later he featured in films.* *Photos: Serge Lido*

THE SLATTERN: *Carla Fracci in the first act of Rodrigues'* Cinderella *at La Scala. The title role in this ballet was her first important role.*



AT THE BALL: *Fracci as the transformed Cinderella in the ballroom scene of Prokofiev's ballet.* *Photos: Picagliani*

PRINCE IN THE AIR: *Roberto Fascilla, one of the principal male dancers of La Scala, as the Prince. The ballet was designed by André Beaurepaire*

CINDERELLA IN ITALY

Frederick Ashton was the first choreographer to mount Prokofiev's *Cinderella* outside Russia when Sadler's Wells Ballet gave it at Covent Garden in 1948. Now another British choreographer, Alfred Rodrigues, has created another version of the same work for the ballet at La Scala, Milan. This production has brought a new Italian star into prominence.

by MARIO PORCILI

PROKOFIEV'S *Cinderella*, composed in 1941 and now staged for the first time at La Scala, took us back to the days when Perrault's fairy story first captivated our childhood imaginations. The music overflows with irresistible melodic and rhythmic invention and is none the worse for Prokofiev's self-borrowing from his opera, *The Love for Three Oranges*, from *Peter and the Wolf* and from early works.

The production was the best thing La Scala has done over the past year, with the fine *corps de ballet* contributing much to the general excellence. Rodrigues' choreography was well-conceived and satisfying, except for some boring passages which can partly be blamed on the slow unfolding of the story. The *pas de deux* for Cinderella and the Prince were particularly effective. Solo variations for these characters, on the other hand, were less successful, notably the Prince's second-act solo which proved too difficult for Giulio Perugini.

Too comic for Italy

Whereas in Ashton's version for Sadler's Wells the Ugly Sisters are male roles, on this occasion they were interpreted by Joyce Graeme and Brenda Hamlyn, with, if anything, too much comic relish. Rodrigues had obviously forgotten that it is only in England that the sisters are traditionally slapstick or, if it comes to that, ugly. It might also be objected that the lively spontaneity which these two English guest-artists brought to their portrayals was achieved at some expense of discipline, their performances tending to vary too much in details of "business" from night to night.

Making her first Milanese appearance, Violetta Verdy scored a great personal success as Cinderella. Her slender figure and youthful appearance made her an ideal choice and she won all hearts, both as the humble kitchen drudge of the first Act and as the transformed radiant princess of the second. We were nevertheless proud to welcome a young graduate of the La Scala ballet school, Carla Fracci, who made her debut by taking over this ballerina role, replacing Verdy on the third performance.

Not only has Fracci continued to win the plaudits of the discriminating La Scala audience, but she has already joined the small group of the company's leading dancers, headed by Olga Amati, Giulio Perugini, Luciano Novaro, Mario Pistoni, Vera Colombo and Ugo dell'Ara, who is also ballet master and choreographer.

New star and her master

Fracci was well groomed for her debut by dell'Ara, who took a great risk in entrusting her with so long and complex a role, normally only given to an experienced and mature artist. His confidence was rewarded with a triumph, Fracci giving us cause to hope that the days when Italy gave such great names to the dance as Carlotta Grisi, Fanny Cerrito and Maria Taglioni may yet come again.

Her success is all the more remarkable for the fact that the part of Cinderella was mounted on Verdy, and not with Fracci's own technical capacities and personal qualities in mind. Much of the credit must go to Fracci's teacher, Ugo dell'Ara, for without proper schooling, her gifts could never have been revealed.

Possessing a theatre sense and a knowledge and experience of ballet only expected from one twice his age, Ugo dell'Ara has served his art well in the 10 years he has been *premier danseur* and ballet master at La Scala. Not only has he proved himself as an enlightened teacher and a worthy interpreter of all the celebrated male roles in the international repertoire, but he has also had the benefit of working with all the leading present-day choreographers and composers. Last year he won his laurels as a fully-fledged choreographer in his own right by managing to bring off an Italian ballet which one would hardly have thought within the scope of so young an artist.

Milanese hopes run high that dell'Ara's run of spectacular achievement will extend to his next project—another ballet on an Italian theme not of his choice and not entirely to his taste. We are confident that, as always, he will overcome any obstacles and that another fine ballet will be added to the theatre's growing repertoire.

Good dancers make good teachers

The confidence which the directors of La Scala have shown in him has once again been shown to have been justified by the loving skill and poetic sensibility that has obviously gone into his preparation of Fracci for her debut, so that a difficult public was immediately won over to applaud the debut of a new dancer who will surely make her mark as a leading Italian ballerina.

Carlo Blasis was no doubt correct when he wrote in his famous teaching treatise that the only good teachers are those who were also in their day good dancers. There is all the more reason to hope that one day we may speak of Ugo dell'Ara and his talented daughter Stefania as once the world spoke of Filippo Taglioni and his daughter Maria.

Ballet in Italy

This article is the first of a series of monthly articles on ballet in Italy. Next month Ugo dell'Ara, leading male dancer and ballet master at La Scala, will write about the recent developments in his country. There will also be a review of *Persephone*, a new ballet by Janine Charrat to the Stravinsky music, recently created in Palermo. After that we intend to give Italy as much prominence in DANCE AND DANCERS as we give to France and America with monthly news, reviews and pictures.

NEW BALLET

SOIREE

First given by the Ballet of the Metropolitan Opera House at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on December 23, 1955. Choreography by Zachary Solov. Music by Rossini-Britten (*Soirées Musicales* and *Matinées Musicales*). Setting and costumes by Cecil Beaton.

CAST

The Girl .. ..MARY ELLEN MOYLAN
The Hostess .. .. MARGARET BLACK
The Boy .. .. OLEG BRIANSKY
The Spaniard .. .. ADRIANO VITALE

1. **March** Black and *corps de ballet*
2. **Canzonetta** Moylan, Briansky and *corps*
3. **Tirolese** *Corps de ballet*
4. **Bolero** Vitale and *corps*
5. **Tarantella** *Corps de ballet*
6. **Quadrille** *Corps de ballet*
7. **Pas de deux** Moylan, Briansky
8. **Variations** Briansky and girls
9. **Variations** Moylan and boys
10. **Moto Perpetuo** Full company

ZACHARY SOLOV'S new plotless ballet for the Metropolitan Opera was premiered just before Christmas and, happily, it is a marked improvement over last season's generally disappointing *Vittorio*. Set to Rossini music that has been skilfully arranged by Benjamin Britten, as *Soirées Musicales* and *Matinées Musicales*, this 25-minute ballet employs the complete *corps de ballet* as well as Mary Ellen Moyland and Oleg Briansky (both making their debuts with this company at this performance), Margaret Black and Adriano Vitale. The suite of 10 short dances, set in the period of a century ago, is a sort of cotillion with the dancers at a masked ball. This provides an opportunity for the introduction of Tirolese, Spanish and Italian divertissements as well as a quadrille and, of course, a *pas de deux*, all being set in the framework of a party. The *Soirées Musicales* suite was, of course, formerly used by Antony Tudor for his ballet of the same name for the London Ballet.

The decor and costumes by Cecil Beaton (his first for the Met) are from this designer's top drawer. The decor is a blue and white valentine fret-work, and against this he sets off the dancers in a brilliant series of yellow, orange and white costumes. The play of these colours against each other, and the backdrop, provides a continually ravishing treat for the eyes and Karinska executed these costumes so beautifully that they seem part of the dance movement. And young conductor Thomas Schippers, also making his debut at the Met, provided dashing support from the orchestra pit.

An interesting note in the first-night programme said, in part: "The production has been made possible by the sponsorship of the Metropolitan National Council, which has chosen this practical way of demonstrating its interest in the development of Metropolitan Ballet." (*Soirée* cost some $15,000 to mount and this figure included Cecil Beaton's fee, the cost of producing the costumes and decor as well as additional orchestra rehearsals.) And the conclusion: "It is the justified ambition of every good *corps de ballet* and its choreographer to go beyond their regular appearance in the repertoire and create new works which stand on their own toes."

Certainly this new work does just that and for this the dance world, at least, owes a debt of gratitude to director Rudolf Bing, choreographer Zachary Solov, artist Cecil Beaton,

PAS DE DEUX: *Mary Ellen Moylan and Oleg Briansky in the* pas de deux *from* Soirée. *Both artists made their debut at the Metropolitan Opera House in this ballet. Moylan was previously with Ballet Theatre, Briansky made his name with Festival Ballet and recently partnered Markova in* The Merry Widow. *Photo: LeBlang*

prima ballerina Mary Ellen Moyland and *premier danseur* Oleg Briansky.

It must be added that the *corps de ballet* is distinctly interesting to watch. Here is a group that is certainly not neo-classic in style. Rather, there is an evident lyricism and classicism that is increasingly apparent. This could stem, quite naturally, from the Antony Tudor and Margaret Craske classes in the Metropolitan Opera School. However, it is a welcome quality and one that bears watching and nurturing.

THE FINALE *of* Soirée *with the full company. Mary Ellen Moylan, Oleg Briansky, Margaret Black and Adriano Vitale are seen in the group in the centre. Beaton's blue and white setting makes a striking foil for costumes in orange, yellow and white. Photo: LeBlang*

Birth of a Ballet

The Théâtre de Monte Carlo, the subject of an article in last month's DANCE AND DANCERS, has seen the creation of many of this century's most important ballets. The tingling Mediterranean air and the lush natural beauty of the theatre's setting have probably played as important a part in inspiring artists and choreographers as the theatre's splendid facilities for the preparation of ballets.

Festival Ballet, always welcome in Monte Carlo, has until now given little encouragement to members of the company to create ballets for its repertoire. The main difficulty has been that the complications, caused by constant touring, of maintaining the existing repertoire allow little time for creation within the company. Now a new phase of the company's existence may have begun with Wolfgang Brunner's *Les Deux Errants* (*The Seekers*). This ballet was mainly created in Monte Carlo and first given there with enormous success on January 21. Here is the story of the ballet in the making:

All photos specially taken by Jeffrey Kovel

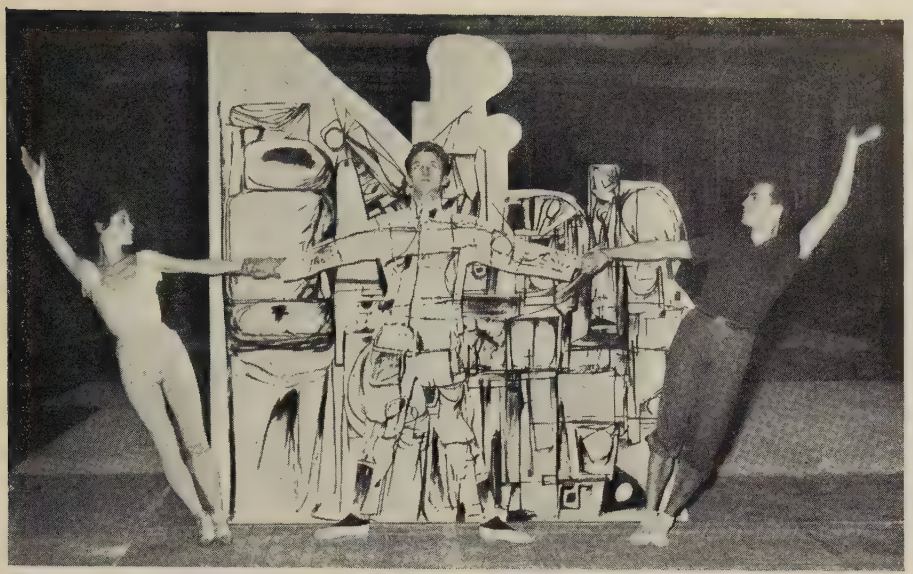
FIRST VISIBLE SIGN: *The design by Dan Snyder for the setting of Brunner's projected ballet, eventually to become* Les Deux Errants.

HAND-PAINTED COSTUMES: *The costumes for the corps de ballet are literally part of the decor. Here, in the same operation Snyder paints costumes and scenery for Festival Ballet's production.*

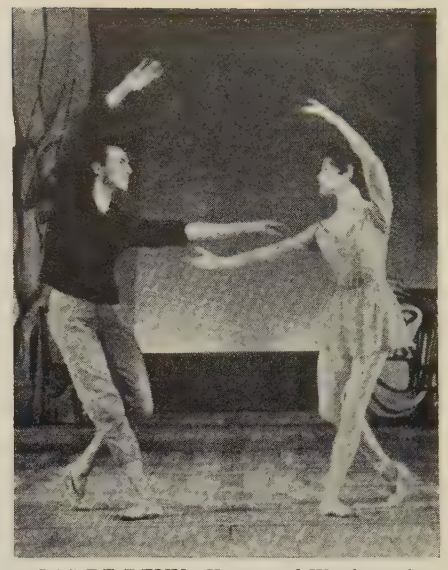
CONTINENTAL SCENE-PAINTING: *Snyder at work, watched by Brunner, in the vast scene-painting studio of the Monte Carlo Theatre. This shows the Continental method of painting scenery laid flat on the floor, as against the practice in other parts of the world where the cloths are painted while hanging.*

CAMOUFLAGE: *Standing against the decor, Maurice Metliss has his costume painted.*

ENTER THE PRINCIPALS (right): *The ballet's leading characters—Belinda Wright and Michel Hogan—begin preliminary rehearsals in the studio while the decor is being built and painted.*



THE SCENERY REHEARSES: *Wright and Hogan rehearse with Kenneth Sudell, whose ingenious costume has made him a part of the setting; though his face still has to be painted to make him completely invisible.*



PAS DE DEUX: *Hogan and Wright in their costumes. His, black jersey with scarlet trousers; hers, an orange dress.*

THE idea of *Les Deux Errants* first came to Wolfgang Brunner after reading a poem in Christian Morganstern's *Der Wanderer*. The theme of searchers for truth or happiness subjected to influences that help or hinder—fate, if you like—is one of the most typical of post-war ballet plots. Two ballets by Cranko—*Harlequin in April* and *The Shadow*—are based on this idea.

Brunner had originally intended to mount his ballet for Ballet Workshop but eventually felt that the conception he had in mind was unsuitable for a stage as small as that of the Mercury Theatre. The idea simmered for some time until he was with the de Cuevas Ballet and met Dan Snyder. Snyder, an American painter and sculptor who had made an extensive study of the theatre, had designed an effective setting for *Duo*, a ballet by Paul Goubé. Brunner told him his idea when the two were in Casablanca and in a few hours Snyder produced the sketch reproduced at the top of the opposite page.

There was a possibility that the ballet might have been done for the de Cuevas company with music by Jean Michel Damase, but when Brunner left the company, together with his wife, Belinda Wright, to re-join Festival Ballet, the project was dropped. It was Damase who suggested to Brunner that Bill Russo, a trombone player in Stan Kenton's orchestra, was keen to compose ballet music. Russo came to England last summer and work was begun. Complications set in when Russo had to return to America and the final details had to be worked out at long distance across the Atlantic.

Eventually, with the help of Festival Ballet's conductor, Geoffrey Corbett, a piano score was put together which made it possible for rehearsals to begin. The full orchestral score did not arrive until a week before the ballet was due to go on in Monte Carlo.

Although the ballet was more or less completed in the minds of those responsible for its separate elements, it was not until the beginning of January that it was decided which company would stage it. Brunner asked Julian Braunsweg whether it would be possible for the work to be tried out by Festival Ballet during the Monte Carlo season. Braunsweg, the company's director, immediately agreed.

Without delay Dan Snyder got to work on the scenery and costumes, all of which he painted himself in the studio of the theatre, frequently working all through the night to have everything completed in time. Rehearsals went ahead in what spare time there was between the routine company rehearsals.

A few days before the opening the rehearsals showed the ballet in an advanced stage, and I look forward to seeing it in its final form in London during the company's Festival Hall season in July. For a first work, it struck me that Brunner has a very good idea of choreography. He has obviously been inspired by Roland Petit and George Skibine, yet he seems well on the way to developing a personal idiom.

The theme—two people find each other and together discover understanding—is abstract and can be interpreted in many ways. The couple—Belinda Wright and Michel Hogan—are hindered and encouraged by figures (Estella Nova, Jeffrey Kovel, Ronald Emblen, Leon Ward, Kenneth Sudell, Maurice Metliss, David Scott) which are anonymous and merge with the scenery. The two principals undergo a wide range of experience and emotion until they are last seen together facing the future, free from all inhibitions and outside influences. The ballet was ideal for showing the brilliantly precise technique and innocent quality of Wright. It also showed Hogan's ability to sustain sensitively a romantic characterisation and revealed new facets of his personality.

P.W.

TOGETHER AT LAST: *Settings and costumes completed (compare the finished setting with the sketch on opposite page).* Les Deux Errants *was first shown to the public at the Théatre de Monte Carlo on January* 21. *London will not see it until the Festival Hall season in July.*

curtain up!

COCKTAILS BRING SMILES

Ballerinas from six countries enjoying cocktails before the luncheon given by the Pavlova Commemoration Committee at the Savoy Hotel on January 22. (L. to R.) Elsa Marianne von Rosen, Svetlana Beriosova, Yvette Chauriré, Marjorie Tallchief, Alicia Markova and Beryl Grey.

Photo: Paul Wilson

Lunch at the Savoy

A LITTLE more than a century ago it was considered a great feat to get four of the world's greatest ballerinas on to the stage at the same time, which is what Lumley achieved in the famous *Pas de Quatre*. The Pavlova Committee in London managed to get no less than 11 ballerinas on to the stage of the Stoll theatre for the commemorative midnight matinee on January 23, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pavlova's death.

Possibly one of the reasons for the extreme cordiality that prevailed throughout was that all those taking part in the performance were invited to a luncheon at the Savoy Hotel on the previous day. Over an informal and delightful meal the dancers chatted gaily with former dancers of Pavlova's company and other members of the committee. This was an occasion of which Pavlova, who always liked good food and wine, would surely have thoroughly approved. This friendly atmosphere was carried over to the rehearsals and performance on the following day.

A Briton scores in Vienna

TO an English dancer has gone the credit for the success of the first ballet programme presented at the newly rebuilt and much publicised Vienna State Opera. Gordon Hamilton, once a soloist of Sadler's Wells Ballet and later with Roland Petit's companies, has been responsible for a well-received production of *Giselle* and also, equally important, for a marked rise in the technical standards of the company.

Thus British ballet comes more and more to play the part, formerly filled by France, Italy and Russia, of continuing and propagating the classical ballet tradition.

Unfortunate publicity

A YOUNG lady very much in the spotlight just now is Anya Linden. Newspaper after newspaper is discussing the possibility that she may one day become the principal ballerina of Sadler's Wells Ballet. One columnist even suggested that she might "step into Dame Margot's shoes." Taken literally, this would probably prove most uncomfortable for her.

How stupid this kind of publicity is. Fonteyn is so great an artist that there will never be a "second" duplicate of her; Linden is a most promising dancer who is sensible enough to want instead to become famous as the "first" Linden.

It was only a year ago that we were subjected to similar chatterings in the press. We were told of the grim struggle between two other young aspirants to the same position. One of them is now a ranking ballerina; the other appears (temporarily, no doubt) to be in eclipse. Such is fame!

Matches and hatches

SONIA AROVA is well known and admired by English audiences, having danced here with at least five different companies—four English and one French. Now she is a ballerina with American Ballet Theatre and has recently married a soloist of that same company—Job Sanders.

The same number of companies (all English) have numbered Leo Kersley among their soloists. This popular dancer, now teaching in Holland, has become the proud father of a son, John Stanislas, named after Stanislas Idzikovsky. He and his wife, the ballet critic Janet Sinclair, already have a daughter, Alexandra, named after Alexandra Danilova. From the names of their children, it is not difficult to guess that the Kersleys' favourite dancers are of an older generation!

Biggest ballet audience ever

AS reported last month in DANCE AND DANCERS, an estimated 30 million people saw Sadler's Wells Ballet in one performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* on American television. I calculate that for the same number of people to see this ballet at the Royal Opera House, it would have to be performed every night for 33 years without a break. It also probably means that more people saw Margot Fonteyn on that one night than ever saw Anna Pavlova, indefatigable in touring though she was, in the whole of her long career. Some audience!

Not all that was promised

WE have not got quite all we were promised in the way of new creations and revivals by Sadler's Wells Ballet for their Twenty-fifth Anniversary season. True we are getting two short works from Ashton (*La Péri* on February 15 and another in May), one from Macmillan (*Noctambules* on March 1), one from Rodrigues (*The Miraculous Mandarin* in June). But there is still no sign of the three-act Ashton work, the full-length *The Green Serpent* of Cranko, the revival of Fokine's *Petrouchka*; and the promised revival of *Horoscope* will definitely not now take place this year. However nobody can really complain about one new creation a month and most of the promised works will, in any case, be seen before the year is out, or, at least, early next year.

Booksellers help ballet

THE past few months have produced a record number of ballet books and praise is due to the initiative of those booksellers who, with the aid of one of our leading publishers, have organised special window displays about books on the dance. One shop in particular, which does not normally specialise in books on the theatre, devoted a whole window to a collection of more than 30 different books about ballet This kind of publicity probably helps ballet just as much as it helps the book trade generally.

Burlesque becomes fact

ONE episode in Tudor's *Gala Performance* which is always sure of a laugh comes when the *danseur* stands peering into the wings beckoning on the ballerina, not knowing that she has already run on and is delightedly acknowledging the applause in the centre of the stage.

Such an incident actually happened at Covent Garden recently when David Blair, dancing Prince Siegfried for the first time there, gallantly tried to call on Merle Park for an extra bow after her variation in the *pas de trois*. The first indication he had that she had already returned was when she almost bumped into him when again leaving the stage.

Alas, poor Cervantes!

I LIKE the story of a certain ballerina whose linguistic ability does not equal her talent for dancing. Having heard the *Don Quixote Pas de Deux* referred to, for years, by the French version of its name—*Don Quichotte*—she was startled and a little puzzled to see it written down. She had always thought that she was dancing in something called *The Donkey Shot*. All of which possibly accounts for some of the odd versions and interpretations we sometimes see of this famous Petipa *pas de deux*.

---

happy birthday to...

		Mar.
Eva von Genscy	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	11
Ursula Moreton	Sadler's Wells Organisation	13
Pirmin Trecu	Sadler's Wells Ballet	13
Igor Youskevitch	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo	13
Deidre Dixon	Sadler's Wells Ballet	14
Walter Trevor	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	17
Myrna Aaron	Canadian National Ballet	17
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Rowena Jackson	Sadler's Wells Ballet	24
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Shirley Bishop	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	1
Leo Kersley	Teaching in Holland	1
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Lydia Sokolova		4
Antony Tudor	Choreographer in America	4
Maureen Andrews	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	5
Dorothea Zaymes	Sadler's Wells Ballet	6
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Henry Legerton	Sadler's Wells Ballet	17
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NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

First Complete Firebird

The Firebird (Stravinsky). Suisse Romande Orchestra (Ernest Ansermet). Decca LXT5115. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

NOT just another recording of the usual concert suite, but—at long last—a complete *Firebird.*

The fact that Stravinsky himself made several suites out of the music, and even apparently played a part in influencing Balanchine to mount his production of the ballet to yet another cut-down version, has helped to lend support to the theory that *The Firebird* was over-long and gained from being heard in the form of snippets. But Stravinsky's various re-servings of his music over the years have been actuated more by complicated copyright considerations than by purely artistic ones.

For, as Sadler's Wells' loving revival of Fokine's original choreography has so memorably demonstrated, one of the most wonderful things about the score is its sustained continuity of fairytale atmosphere. The wonders of the enchanted garden must emerge in proper sequence and perspective from the all-pervading darkness to achieve their magical potency, so subtly calculated is Stravinsky's compound of silvery moonlight and menacing shadow.

No doubt with the intention of stressing the unity of the score as a continuous impressionistic tone-poem, Ansermet has, I feel, erred a little in the opposite direction by underplaying the music's dramatic qualities. The cicadas and the mysterious winds of the opening, the whirling kaleidoscope of golden light that heralds the approach of the Firebird, are heard as fascinating sounds to be savoured for themselves, rather than suggesting any particular theatrical significance. The dance of Kotschei's demons, which should achieve the ghastly momentum of a nightmare, is given an altogether tame performance.

But the recording is marvellously vivid, with every note emerging in absolute clarity and after all complete recordings of *The Firebird,* unlike golden apples, do not grow on trees.

The cover design, a colourfully imaginative fantasy on Bakst's original costume design for the Firebird, is a brilliant piece of work. But the writer of the programme note should have known that Kotschei's soul is supposed to be contained in an egg which Ivan breaks.

Verdiana

The Lady and the Fool (Verdi arr. Mackerras). Philharmonia Orchestra (Charles Mackerras) HMV CLP1059. 12in. 33*s.* 11½*d.*

CHARLES MACKERRAS' brilliant refurbishing of early Verdi material for Cranko's *The Lady and the Fool* has been deservedly compared with Respighi's celebrated arrangement of Rossini for *La Boutique Fantasque.* The score also caused something of a stir among Verdi experts who were surprised to find themselves recognising hardly a single theme—the reason being that, apart from a dozen bars of Mackerras' own linking material, all the music derives originally from operas rarely, if ever, performed nowadays. Perhaps one well-known opera critic can be forgiven for suggesting, after the first night, that the whole thing was a brilliant hoax and the Mackerras had invented all the tunes himself!

This first complete recording includes the Epilogue, omitted in the present Covent Garden production of the ballet. The performance is a delight from start to finish, with Charles Mackerras once again demonstrating his ability, perhaps to a greater extent than any other living conductor, bar Efrem Kurtz, to infuse ballet music with the very spirit of the dance. One would have thought that the directors of Sadler's Wells would have seen it sticking out a mile that here was the only and obvious successor to Constant Lambert.

A successful Carnaval

Carnaval (Schumann). Andor Foldes (piano). Deutsche Grammophon DG16108. 10in. 29*s.* 6½*d.*

THERE are so many "characters" in *Carnaval* —so many subtly varied facets of Schumann's own elusive romantic personality masquerading in *Commedia dell'Arte* disguise —that only a pianist of infinite sensibility amounting to genius could be expected to succeed completely in catching all of their heart-beats in any single performance.

Foldes has no out-and-out failures, only some near misses. The dynamic contrasts of *Pierrot,* for instance, are barely hinted at; *Arlequin* is merely in a hurry instead of sounding the embodiment of quick-silver lightness. But *Florestan, Valse Noble* (given without the first repeat), *Chiarina* and the *Marche* are gloriously done. Unlike some pianists and as in the ballet, Foldes observes Schumann's *agitato* direction for *Chopin.*

In the main, then, this is a sensitively nuanced and rhythmically buoyant performance of note-perfect accuracy, phrased with eloquence devoid of any trace of mannerism. Above all, Foldes shows that he knows and loves *Carnaval*—a conviction not imparted by the greater majority of pianists who have recorded it on LP. A fine recording helps to make the disc rewarding.

Gore's Sibelius ballet

Antonia (Sibelius: *The Tempest*—Incidental Music). Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Sir Thomas Beecham). Philips ABR4045. 10in. 28*s.* 8*d.*

SIBELIUS wrote his incidental music to *The Tempest,* his last published work of any consequence, for an elaborate production of Shakespeare's play staged at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, in 1926. This superb performance under Beecham of the major part of the score includes the three items from the music—*The Oak Tree, Intrada* and the exquisite *Berceuse*—which formed part of the Sibelius music for Walter Gore's powerful dramatic ballet *Antonia,* created several years ago for the Ballet Rambert, and in which Paula Hinton scored a sensational success in the title role.

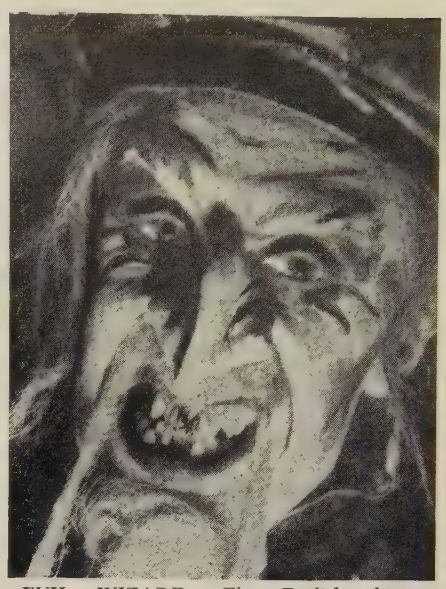
Of the remaining works used by Gore, the symphonic poem, *The Bard,* is still unavailable on records; *Festivo,* the music for the carnival scene, is conducted by Beecham on 33C1018 (LP) and SEB3504 (45).

Alive and kicking

Gould: *Interplay—American Concertette. Spirituals.* Cor de Groot (piano), The Hague Philharmonic Orchestra (Willem van Otterloo). Philips NBR6029. 10in. 25*s.* 9*d.*

WHEN Ballet Theatre came to Covent Garden in 1947 it was Jerome Robbins' *Interplay,* together with his *Fancy Free,* that gave us our first taste of a then-new American dance idiom, the blend of jive and classicism long since familiar from countless stage and film musicals, not to mention that British *Interplay*—Michael Charnley's *Symphony for Fun* for Festival Ballet.

Morton Gould's music, which successfully casts racy popular styles in a straight-jacket of classical form with the patient still very much alive and kicking, lent itself ideally to Robbins' extravert romp of a ballet, which won the composer's enthusiastic approval.



EVIL WIZARD: *The English dancer Algeranoff as Kotschei in the pre-war de Basil production of* The Firebird. *The picture shows Algeranoff's mastery of grotesque character make-up.*

Gould has also written in glowing terms regarding the present recording, describing the Dutch musicians' performance of the four movements—headed *With drive and vigour, Gavotte, Blues* and *Very fast with verve and gusto*—as an "authoritative rendition of the piece" and showing "amazing understanding of my style." The exuberance and high spirits of it all are certainly infectious and the recording is excellent in every way.

The five-movement suite on the reverse, in which Gould attempts to evoke the atmosphere of Negro spirituals, is on an altogether lower level of inspiration.

Ballet music guide

Nights at the Ballet. Ballet music on Columbia, His Masters' Voice and Parlophone Long Playing records. EMI Ltd., 1*s.*

WHAT was the Mozart music John Taras used for his ballet *Graziana,* and is there a recording available? The answers, to this and to many other ballet music queries which so often elude the enthusiast in search of a recording of a particular score not specially written for ballet, are provided in this excellent illustrated catalogue of all the music with ballet associations on Columbia, HMV and Parlophone LP records issued up to the end of December, 1955.

The items are listed alphabetically under the names of the ballets, of which some 140 are represented. Why, incidentally, is there still no mention of the recording of *Cimarosiana* promised at the time of the DiaghilevExhibition?

In addition there are separate articles by Pigeon Crowle on eight famous ballets and on leading ballet personalities, written with taste and sane judgment—although the older generation of ballet-goers might well consider the claims made on behalf of Margot Fonteyn a little exaggerated.

This well-produced and, apart from several tiny misprints, admirably accurate booklet will be invaluable both to the public and to record dealers.

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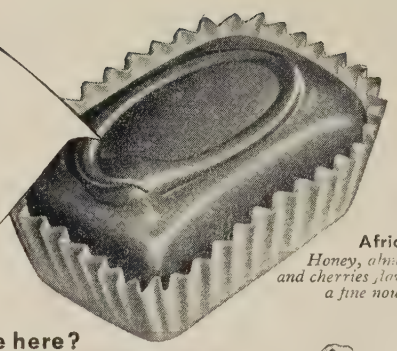

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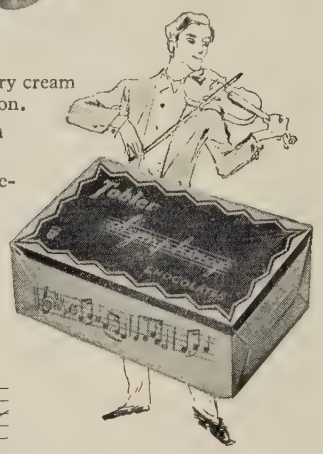

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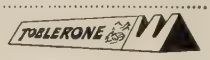

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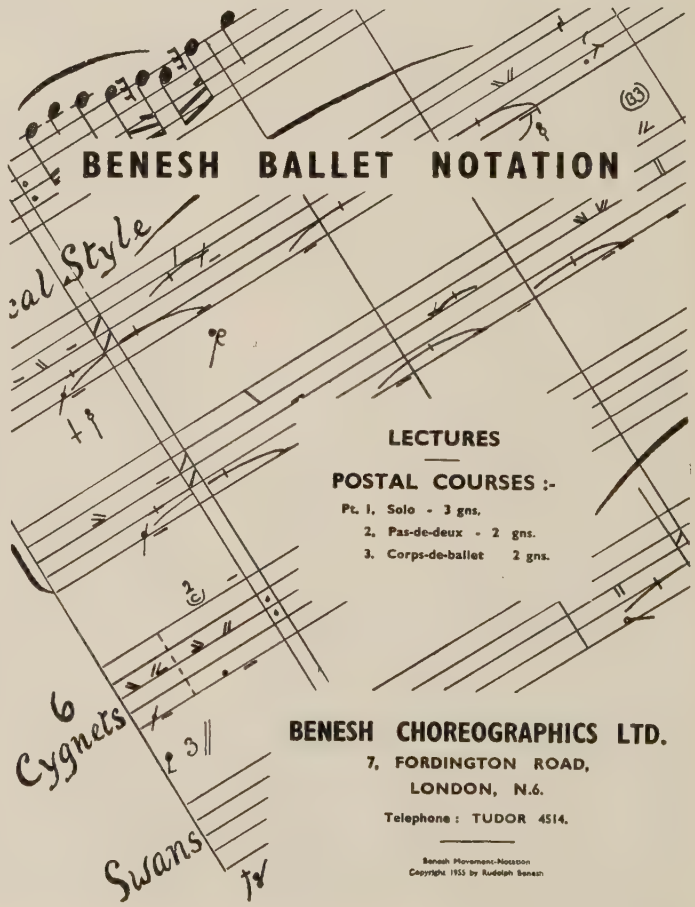

Mainly Markova

STEPS INTO BALLET

The third of three programmes. Given on BBC Children's Television on January 12. Commentary by Peggy van Praagh. Designer, Douglas Smith. Produced by Naomi Capon. Music for the demonstration played by John Lanchbery.

The Ballet: *Cinderella*
Choreography by Gilbert Vernon. Music by John Addison. Played by the Melos Ensemble.
Dancers
DONALD BRITTON MAUREEN BRUCE
JILL DENNING

THIS series has the same small group of dancers presenting a demonstration of ballet technique and later a short ballet incorporating, as far as its choreographer can make possible, the movements we have already watched. What is going to be squeezed in between the two while the dancers change their clothes? The problem is perplexing, and the producer, Naomi Capon, failed to reach a satisfactory solution.

To fill the gap this time, Gilbert Vernon, the choreographer, was brought in to be questioned by Peggy van Praagh as to how he makes his choreography express his ideas. A perfunctory remark or two, two movements, one illustrated by Vernon himself and the other by Peggy van Praagh to his counting, failed to satisfy our curiosity. This was probably the best way of fielding off a difficult question when one has only three minutes in which to answer.

But, if the series is to be repeated, as it most likely will be, a little more care, time and thought given to this section would give the programme greater cohesion and remove some quite appalling embarrassments for the artists.

Considering the limited vocabulary at his disposal, Gilbert Vernon's choreography for his version of *Cinderella*, alternating long *pas de deux* and short solos for Cinderella, was interesting and sufficiently ingenious to make one want to see his next work.

Taken as a whole these programmes have been successful, but the main ingredient in their success has been Peggy van Praagh's professional skill in preparing the commentaries and her light-hearted touch and assurance when delivering them.

Another thing which emerged from this series was the talent of the youngest dancer, Jill Denning. She is a great credit to her teacher, Nora Roche.

CASSE NOISETTE

Excerpts from Act I, Scene 2, of *Casse Noisette*. **Choreography, Ivanov. Presented by Bill Ward. Given on January 8 in the programme, Sunday Night at the Palladium.**
ALICIA MARKOVA
MILORAD MISCOVITCH

IT was very cunning for ITA to arrange that its first ballet programme, the Snowflakes scene from *Casse Noisette*, should coincide with the first fall of snow in London this winter.

Although, to say the least, the team selected was a very unusual one for Markova to appear with—a troupe of Danish acrobats, popular singers, an eccentric pianist and Tommy Trinder—from the very first moment as she came slowly to life to the final pose, she received so much applause that, at times, the music was drowned.

I cannot help wondering whether this audience fully appreciated the tastefulness of her dancing or recognised the expression and feeling she put into all her movements. But, whatever the motives for so much applause, there is little doubt that they preferred her to the "entertainers."

Miscovitch, fully aware of Markova's style, effaced his own personality and partnered her beautifully with quiet discrimination. But the rough scenery and flat lighting fell very short of what is required to show Markova off as she should be presented.

AUTUMN BACCHANALE: *Alicia Markova and Milorad Miscovitch in* Autumn Bacchanale *which was one of the several excerpts from Pavlova's repertoire given by these two dancers, supported by Ballet Rambert, in the long feature programme,* Immortal Swan, *on January* 19.

The music for this pas de deux *is from Glazounov's* The Seasons; *the dance has the joy and abandon of an ancient Greek revel.*

Photo: Paul Wilson

TELEVISION
Reviewed by E. C. MASON

The camera work was straightforward and, as there were few changes of camera angle and almost no close-ups, the whole effect was one of a flatly filmed stage performance.

On the previous Sunday, we watched what progress had been made in the presentation of ballet when the BBC staged an effectively lit *Les Patineurs*. While I would not go so far as to suggest ITA request their special effects man to oblige with persistent trick effects, I would like to remind them that if, through lack of close-ups, they force themselves to reduce a whole stage set to the size of a television screen, more imaginative production is necessary.

For some time now we have been waiting for ITA to present ballet, and with such an obvious success for their first venture, in spite of my criticisms, it is gratifying to think that they may be encouraged to offer us more.

IMMORTAL SWAN

A Play based on the Life of Anna Pavlova by Paul Tabori. Given on January 19.
Pavlova Danced by Alicia Markova
Acted by Dilys Hamlett
The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eric Robinson. Dances reproduced by Cleo Nordi. Designer, Barry Learoyd. Produced by Patricia Foy.
Dancers
ALICIA MARKOVA
MILORAD MISCOVITCH
THE BALLET RAMBERT

ALTHOUGH Pavlova's life and career are so fully documented, there are many inconsistencies about exact details. While everybody agreed about her supremacy as a dancer, they disagreed about almost everything else. Her husband, Victor Dandré, has quoted her as saying that "in order to preserve unspoilt the pictures created by him, the artist should show himself to the public only on stage, *never* in private life." She adhered to this principle. And, therefore, the problem the dramatist has to face is that any treatment of her life away from her company is hardly likely to be accurate.

To compress Pavlova's career from the age of 18 until her death in Holland at 51 into a programme of one and a half hours seemed too ambitious a task.

Though it is difficult to fault the acting and production, the writing is a different matter. Paul Tabori, no doubt overwhelmed by so much material, lacked the artist's discarding eye, and seemed uncertain as to what to leave out. There were too many brief episodes from Pavlova's life, some as flashbacks, and the whole play, consequently, seemed uneven and badly put together.

The dialogue, painfully sprinkled with Russian names, was unconvincing and gave little help to the actors. However, Dilys Hamlett, astonishingly like Pavlova in appearance and without any noticeable help from make-up, gave an excellent performance.

The ballet scenes with Markova, Miscovitch and the Ballet Rambert were most effective but ridiculously brief. Excerpts from *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Autumn Leaves*, *L'Automne Bacchanale*, the *Dragonfly* solo and, of course, *Le Cygne*, were given. Two, in particular, came over remarkably well. These were *L'Automne Bacchanale*, excitingly lit and photographed, and *Autumn Leaves*, in which Miscovitch was outstanding as the Wind.

By now the BBC should be fully aware that perils of tedium await this long feature type of programme. If the writer had spared the viewers one or two of his short little scenes and dancing had been given instead, we would have been more grateful. As it was, it was only the few seconds of relief brought by the dancing that saved the programme from complete disaster.

Surely the best tribute that could have been paid to Anna Pavlova's genius would have been to have Markova dancing more of her *divertissements*. And Cleo Nordi showed that she knows just how these should be reproduced.

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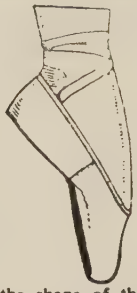

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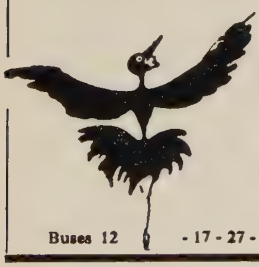

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SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

Happy return of Cinderella

THIS year sees the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sadler's Wells Ballet and the Opera House itself celebrates its tenth birthday as a "nationalised industry." Fonteyn is dancing better than ever, while a new generation of younger dancers is coming into its own.

The pleasant auguries were fully justified by the first few weeks of the season, even though, as the presence of the opera company reduced the already severely limited storage space available for scenery, the repertory proved somewhat limited. The weight of the programmes was borne by three full-length ballets, *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia*, and a revival of *Cinderella*.

The last-named was first given on the afternoon of January 7. Even though it has by now achieved well over 100 performances at the Opera House, the ballet wears extremely well and suits the company better than before. When *Cinderella* was last revived Ashton made a number of major changes in the choreography (chiefly in extending the roles of Cinderella and her Prince) and on this revival he contented himself with small amendments and production touches. As a result the ballet now sustains the interest from the first to last. It contains much of Ashton's most touching choreography (the *pas de deux* is a particular gem) and the scenario is the best Ashton has so far used for a full-length ballet.

Admittedly the kitchen scenes are not on the same level as the rest (the central characters apart, these scenes lack the humanity that might have made them memorable—the Danes, one feels, might have arranged this better) but the ballet stands as a remarkable achievement. One wonders whether Ashton has ever considered the possibility of adding the *divertissement* scene representing the Prince's search for Cinderella in the four corners of the earth, which is in Prokofiev's score and scenario yet omitted from the Covent Garden production.

Fonteyn's portrayals grow into greatness, and her Cinderella now possesses a refined perfection. Some dancers triumph by imprinting their personality on a role. Fonteyn, who has no personality in that limited sense, breathes life into art and so creates. She *is* Cinderella not an actress making believe. This gift, shared by a mere handful of executants in all the arts, is the touchstone of interpretative genius. Somes, her consort, provides the ideal foil for her gifts. His dancing is athletic, his partnering faultless, while his command of the grand manner has become such that it is more interesting to watch him take a curtain-call than to see most dancers actually dance. Unlike Cinderella the Prince is inescapably made of cardboard (Princes are only interesting when they behave unprincely) but Somes at least colours him with character and a dash of humour.

The rest of the company supported excellently. Ashton's compassionate ugly duckling of an Ugly Sister has found a fine partner in Kenneth Macmillan's termagant—a virago, who if she could not launch a thousand ships would at least sink them.

Both Alexander Grant and Brian Shaw were excellent as the Jester, but only Grant reminded me of the Fool in *Lear*. Rosemary Lindsay was a more gracious Godmother than Julia Farron; incidentally I wonder whatever became of the Godmother's variation?

Anne Heaton's breezy Fairy Spring and Pauline Clayden's windswept Fairy Autumn had the better over a Summer by Anya Linden that was too warm for comfort, and a Winter by Beriosova that needed crisp frost to be seasonable. In the first Act, unfortunately, the *corps* of stars were occasionally out of their courses, but for the rest the performances went well.

An enchanting Swanilda

COPPELIA has been given with a fair assortment of casts, and at one performance Beriosova gave an enchanting Swanilda. This is still one of the best performances in any ballet the company can offer. John Hart, who is apparently restricting himself to mime roles this season, was the well-characterised Dr. Coppelius and Philip Chatfield played Franz. Chatfield partnered competently but his variation was better calculated to make the floor-boards creak than the rafters ring. Both David Blair and Shaw have danced well in this.

Tempo troubles

THE season's first *Swan Lake* was magnificiently disastrous. George Weldon conducted and it seemed as though he had never seen the production before. He succeeded in getting good orchestral playing from the pit, but most of the dancers (many of whom appeared to be deaf) performed as though the orchestral tempi were no different from those

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of yesteryear and Mr. Irving. Unfortunately they were. However the only truly impossible tempo Weldon set was for Brian Shaw, who could only have phrased his *Pas de Trois* variation with the assistance of a trapeze.

Fonteyn and Somes, most musical of dancers, apparently had no difficulty in following the conductor, and gave a performance that must surely be definitive, even for them. When the other dancers follow the conductor as sensitively as the principals do, Weldon's engagement could be of the utmost advantage to the company.

Elvin made her first appearance with the company this season as Odette-Odile, partnered for the first time by David Blair, who was also making his debut as Siegfried. Elvin danced with the peculiarly individual style that made her Odette-Odile so justifiably famous a few years back, but which for a time she seemed to lose. Sometimes she over-dramatises facially; her body and sinuous arms are expressive enough not to need such help. Her well-contrasted Odile is far more brilliant now that she has followed the precedent of Markova in 1948 and omitted the *fouettés*.

Blair overacted the first Act with stagey charm and false bonhomie. His acting was infinitely better in the last three Acts—musical and sincere, which is all ballet acting ever has to be. His partnering was sound, his lifting excellent, and his brilliant dancing in the third Act *pas de deux* brought the house down. Elvin and Blair danced a new *coda* (much more like that generally current outside Sadler's Wells) which suited them well. This was a splendid debut and a splendid start to a partnership which, if continued, might well become most important. **C.A.B.**

French joke wears thin

PETIT'S *Ballabile* returned to the repertoire on January 24 and, though the ballet remains beautiful to look at, the joke is beginning to wear a bit thin. These French comedies are really created for the moment—rather like fashions—but when repeated too often the edge goes off the wit. Nevertheless, Elvin, Chatfield and Grant continue to give the roles they created with polish and Deirdre Dixon, new to the soubrette part, with a refreshing sense of zany comedy.

The first three scenes—*A Class Room, A Sunday on the River* and *A Street in the Rain* still have the light touch of fantasy of an early René Clair film but the two final scenes—*Circus on the Green* and *Impressions of Spain*—have become laboured. In spite of its failings, it is to be hoped that this work is retained in the repertoire and given from time to time because it adds the necessary French sauce to the more solemn courses which an opera house ballet is inevitably bound to serve up.

In the same programme, Ashton's *Rinaldo and Armida* was also given. How much this work improves with time! Beriosova has become a magnificent enchantress and her whole interpretation of the Armida role is both chilling and alluring. Her *arabesque* now gives me the greatest *frisson* of anything to be seen on the Covent Garden stage. The work nowadays seems to enjoy an enormous success with the audience.

Linden as Swanilda

Reports of Anya Linden's Swanilda have been glowing so it was with great expectations that the press went to see her in *Coppelia* on January 26. Her first Act justified all that we had been told. She is a fine actress and really "lives" the role of the village girl who has slight heart trouble on account of her flirtatious swain. She reacts to everything that is happening on the stage, has a beautiful line and a crisp finish to everything she does. At the moment she rather lacks musical sensitiveness though, with time, she may acquire this. Frankly this is the only defect that I can see that may stop her from eventually becoming the great star that many people predict of her.

Linden is not, however, an experienced enough artist to completely bring off the second Act and she has not enough personality punch to compensate for the lack of dancing in this scene. In the final Act her *pas de deux* was careful, and here again her lack of musical sense took the glitter off her variations. She showed, nevertheless, enormous promise throughout and with careful schooling and production she should become one of the Wells' brightest lights; physically she has all that it takes.

Blair's Franz has always been impudent and charming and now he has got the feel of the larger stage his portrayal expanded accordingly. It may be the limiting third-act costume which stops his variation from scintillating as much as I believe it should.

The Dr. Coppelius of Leslie Edwards is hardly a sinister character. Edwards seems to see the old doll-maker as a rather lovable character but the great thing about his performance is that it is completely consistent throughout—if your character is such that it is impossible to be convincingly unpleasant, then it is perhaps much better not to try. This does involve a loss of some dramatic contrast from the ballet but at least this Coppelius tones in with the general delightful romp.

Meriel Evans made Aurora a rather misty sunrise, never giving one the feeling she would turn into burning day. Valerie Taylor scored in that show-stealer—Prayer. A great improvement in the production was in the dancing of Swanilda's Friends in Act 1; no longer are they a gaggle of lumpish schoolgirls, but a collection of people we should be pleased to number among our own friends.

Chatfield, a noble prince

WITH only Michael Somes left of the old guard of principal male dancers, any boy taking over a principal role immediately becomes a figure of importance. Philip Chatfield made a notably romantic Prince Siegfried in the full-length *Le Lac des Cygnes* on January 28. Like Somes, Chatfield plays the role with blue blood flowing proudly through his veins; unaffected nobility comes naturally to him. He partnered Beriosova almost faultlessly and danced a stimulating variation in Act 3. With Catfield and Blair as romantic *premiers danseurs* and Grant and Shaw in demi-caractère leads, nobody need be despondent about the future of Wells' male dancers.

Beriosova's Odette-Odile has matured. No longer is there the previous uncertainty which is bound to accompany any newcomer to a great full-length ballerina role. Her romantic second and fourth Acts were always excellent but the confidence of her "black" Act is new. With time she will give it more evil glitter but those wretched 32 *fouettés* no longer cause her trouble. At one moment she started to go off-place but she soon worked back to the centre again and this is the sign of mastery. The variation in this Act is very poor choreographically and nobody—not even Fonteyn—can make anything exciting of it. Both this and the final suicide leap should be attended to if this production is to level-up all round. The four Acts are now so generally good that it is a pity it is let down at two vital points. **P.W.**

CHOREOGRAPHIC GROUP

AFTER giving three programmes in the first year of its existence, the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group has allowed a further two years to elapse before presenting its fourth offering on January 22 at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. The Group exists to give choreographic opportunities to dancers of the Sadler's Wells Organisation, and its programmes are given under the auspices of the Vic-Wells Association.

The previous presentations had been prepared by the two main companies, but this fourth programme was entirely the work of the Covent Garden and the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballets, two little-known offshoots of the Sadler's Wells family. The dancers of these groups, neither of which appear independently of their parent opera companies, are for the most part senior students of the School and many of them will pass on to one or other of the senior organisations.

Whereas the earlier productions of the Choreographic Group had been the work of experienced professional dancers, the ballets in this programme were, with only two exceptions, choreographed by dancers who have had no background of working in a ballet company.

Obsession with death

Three of the ballets, Ylona Aron's *Dilemma*, Anthony Sweeny's *Valete* and Judy Laraman's *All Hallow's Eve*, were as alike as peas in a pod, or poems in an undergraduate magazine. They were all, like John Webster, "much obsessed with death," and people in white kept on fighting people in black, with, as far as I can recall, results highly satisfactory to moralists.

Wishmary Hunt's *Café Dansant* was a good deal nearer the mark than the other three. Its young choreographer showed an ear for music (Aaron Copland) and a decided inventiveness, but what she did not know about the construction of a ballet could make the basis for an article.

These four works were offered by the Covent Garden group; the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet fared rather better. Terry Gilbert, an ex-Rambert dancer, presented a plotless ballet, Spectroscope. It is subtitled "a diversion in light," and bears a striking similarity in theme to David Paltenghi's *Prismatic Variations*. The reason for this similarity is that apparently it was originally worked out on the Rambert Company (with the intention of using Vivienne Kernot's decor and costumes for the Paltenghi ballet) but never given. Danced to Lennox Berkeley's well-known *Divertimento*, Gilbert's ballet was ambitious and not entirely unsuccessful. But his choreographic pattern seemed far too muddled, the ballet's ostensible theme (which had presumably been foisted upon the choreographer) was disregarded, and the choice of music was ill-advised.

The great outdoors

The best work on the programme was undoubtedly Peter Wright's *Under Canvas*. A comedy ballet about camping holidays, this had original and genuine humour. Obviously the work of a thoroughly experienced dancer, it not unexpectedly knocked spots off the rest of the programme by virtue of its choreographic know-how.

All six of the ballets were most competently danced, frequently by people who had previously been nothing more than unfamiliar names on programmes. The general standard of male partnering was notably high. Dame Ninette de Valois obviously has a decent store of talent tucked away up her capacious sleeve.

William Wilson, for instance, is probably going to be a most creditable Blue Skater in about five years time, and his was far from being the only promising dancing on view. Wishmary Hunt, Versey Jones, Veronica Leigey, Peter Brownlee, John Stevens and

Jeffrey Taylor all impressed, as did the already better-known Kathryn Beetham, Terry Gilbert and Peter Wright. It was also good to see Pauline Harrop, a few years ago one of the Theatre Ballet's most promising dancers, returned after motherhood and dancing as stylishly as ever.

C.A.B.

FESTIVAL BALLET

Revivals in Monte Carlo

NICHOLAS BERIOSOFF has made a number of changes in his version of Pugni's *La Esmeralda*. Since the ballet was first given in the Festival Hall, London, in 1954, it has undergone many changes; but this recent tightening up all round is by far the most satisfactory version yet achieved. The story, based on Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* is, in actual fact, a very difficult one to realise in terms of the dance and one is inclined to wonder exactly how successful was Perrot's original version.

The opening scene in the bell tower of Notre Dame now has the addition of a "vision of Esmeralda" which possibly helps the story but somehow weakens the drama. Michael Hogan, replacing Dolin as Frollo, is a most convincing monk. Keith Beckett, as always, makes Quasimodo into a rather pathetic creature, though I missed his swinging on the bell rope which previously made an effective curtain; it was as though all his pent-up frustration was released in his work.

Face-lift for Esmeralda

The following scene, *La Cour des Miracles*, remains virtually the same, as also did Act Two, the engagement party of Fleur-de-Lys to Phoebus. It was in the final Act that the greatest tightening-up had been effected. Instead of the several short and confusing scenes, this Act has been brought down to two only. Contrary to the original book, the ending is a happy one with Fleur-de-Lys and Phoebus, and Esmeralda and Gringoire, re-united.

Choreographically the ballet remans rather a mixture of styles and this is particularly noticeable in the *pas de deux* for Fleur-de-Lys and Phoebus in Act Two which has a kind of Lifaresque neo-classic quality rather at variance with the rest of the dancing. The designing of Nicola Benois remains mainly undistinguished and not even the perfect conditions in the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo were able to cover this up.

Fine display of dancing

What may make this version of *La Esmeralda* live is the really splendid performance it gets from the dancers. Marilyn Burr is by far the best of the dancers we have seen trying to make something of the title role. She is a good actress and when technical brilliance is called for, she can provide it in full measure. The two *pas de deux*, in Acts Two and Three, go a long way to making the whole thing worthwhile and it is a pleasure to watch such a display of virtuosity. Burr was admirably supported by Gilpin, who, when he dances alone, turns apparently *ad infinitum*. Even if these two *pas de deux* are no great shakes choreographically they at least add up to a couple of remarkable display pieces. Other good performances came from Belinda Wright and Kenneth Melville, both making the best of two rather hazily sketched in lovers. Melville succeeds in making Phoebus seem of noble birth. Janet Overton, as a toothless old hag, gives a rollicking interpretation, while Ronald Emblen and Jeffrey Kovel make a pair of bouncy buffoons.

Even if *La Esmeralda* will never make the full-length classic we most want to see, the present production at least shows that a company can make the best of what can never have been a very thorough job.

Igor dances have a story

ALTHOUGH the *Prince Igor* dances would, on the face of it, appear to be little more than a suite of theatrically effective character dances, there always was, in Fokine's choreography as revived by Beriosoff, a slender thread of a story. Something like this happens: the Polovtsians are sleeping round a camp fire, a young Polovtsian girl wakes up and points out to the Chief that it is stupid to sleep when there are so many beautiful girls around. He replies that he agrees that the girls are very nice but he has something far better up his sleeve because they have captured in battle some seductive Persian girls. To prove this he says that he will get them to come on and dance. The captives are brought on and everybody gets so excited that a rather decorous orgy ensues. Although this is not quite what happens in Borodine's opera, it makes a suitable excuse to dance.

Dramatic point missed

The Grigorieffs have now revised the ballet in a production similar to the one given by the company of Colonel de Basil. The main alteration is the introduction of an undulating dance right at the beginning of the ballet for the captive slave girls. With this addition an important dramatic point is missed: because if the girls have already been seen there seems little point in the Chief calling them on later. Dramatically, the whole thing now makes no sense. The music for this addition is that used for the song, *Now the daylight dies*, which opens Act Two of the opera where it is sung by a chorus and the chief Polovtsian girl. It is a very beautiful piece of music and if used in the ballet as it was in the Woizikovsky version, with one singer seated in front of a tent with the remainder of the Polovtsians lying around, it can immediately create a wonderful feeling of the solitude and vastness of the Steppes.

In other places the Grigorieffs have added little touches which give added conviction to the ballet. Janet Overton and Anita Landa were excellent as the Captive Princess and the chief Polovtsian Girl. Russell Kerr brings virility to the Polovtsian Chief but he fails to dominate the work as did Vassili Trunoff. However, altogether this a worthy revival of a ballet that cannot help but be a distinguished addition to any repertoire.

P.W.

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Mar.
1 *Les Patineurs, Noctambules, The Lady and the Fool*
2 *Les Patineurs, Noctambules Coppelia* Act 3
3 (M) *Les Sylphides, Noctambules, The Lady and the Fool*
3 (E) *Les Sylphides, Noctambules, The Lady and the Fool*
5 *Noctambules, La Peri, The Lady and the Fool*
6 *The Shadow, La Peri, Homage to the Queen*
7 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fifield, Blair)
8 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Grey, Chatfield)
9 *The Shadow, Noctambules, Homage to the Queen*
10 (M) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes)
10 (E) *The sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Rassine)
12 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
13 *Scenes de Ballet, Noctambules, Homage to the Queen*
14 *Les Patineurs, Madame Chryantheme, The Lady and the Fool*
15 *The Shadow, The Firebird, Les Patineurs*
16 *Noctambules, Madame Chrysantheme, The Firebird*
17 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Elvin, Blair)
17 (E) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Jackson, Somes)
19 *Les Patineurs, La Peri, The Lady and the Fool*
20 *The Shadow, Noctambules, The Lady and the Fool*
21 *Les Patineurs, La Peri, Homage to the Queen*
22 Gala Performance in the presence of the Royal Family
23 *Les Sylphides, Madame Chrysantheme, Noctambules*
24 (M) *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
24 (E) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
26 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Elvin, Blair)
27 *Les Sylphides, The Firebird, Job*
28 *Les Patineurs, The Firebird, Job*
29 *Madame Chrysantheme, Scenes de Ballet, The Firebird*
31 (M) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Rassine)
31 (E) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Chatfield)

Apr.
2 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes)
3 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Somes)
4 *Mam'zelle Angot, Symphonic Variations, Job*
5 *Mam'zelle Angot, Symphonic Variations, Job*
6 *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
7 (M) *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Nerina, Rassine)
7 (E) *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
9 *Scenes de Ballet, La Peri, Mam'zelle Angot*
10 *Noctambules, La Peri, Mam'zelle Angot*
11 *Giselle* (Elvin, Blair)
12 *Giselle* (Grey, Chatfield), *The Three Cornered Hat*
13 *Coppelia* (Linden, Blair)
14 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Rassine)
14 (E) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Chatfield)

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

Mar.
1 The Globe Theatre, Stockton-on-Tees
12 The Opera House, Manchester
19 Alhambra Theatre, Bradford
26 Theatre Royal, Nottingham

Apr.
9 Kings Theatre, Southsea
16 The Pavilion, Bournemouth
22 The Hippodrome, Bristol
30 The Lyceum, Sheffield

May
7 The Empire Theatre, Sunderland
21 The New Theatre, Oxford
29 Sadler's Wells Theatre (3 weeks)

FESTIVAL BALLET

Mar.
5 Grand Opera House, Belfast (2 weeks)
19 Her Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen
26 Kings Theatre, Glasgow (2 weeks)

Apr.
16-22 Théatre de Monte Carlo (Gala season in honour of the wedding of Prince Rainier of Monaco to Miss Grace Kelly)

May
1-9 Spanish tour (Saragossa, Valencia, Bilbao)
11-13 Théatre de l'Opéra, Bordeaux (International Festival of music)
Tour of Switzerland and Italy. Dates to be announced

June
21-25 Florence Festival (Maggio Fiorentino)
29-July 5 Holland Festival (Amsterdam, The Hague)
9 Royal Festival Hall, London (2 months)

BALLET RAMBERT

Mar.
19 New Theatre, Hull
26 Television performances
European summer tour to be announced

BALLETS DE PARIS at the Palace Theatre, London

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FILMS at the Royal Festival Hall, London

Mar. 26, 27. Apr. 2, 6 Ulanova and entire company of the Bolshoi Ballet, Moscow, in Prokofieff's *Romeo and Juliet*
(performances 6 and 8.30 p.m. extra matinee Apr. 2 at 3 p.m.)

WEST COUNTRY BALLET at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre

May 17, 18 (7.30 p.m.). Three ballets first given at the Edinburgh Festival last year—*Black-Eyed Susan, Herne the Hunter, The Selchie*—and London premieres of Wendy Hilton's *Short Story* and Iain Montague's *Arcadian Suite*. Programme presented by the London Ballet Circle.

LECTURES at St. Luke's Hall South, Chelsea at 3.30 p.m.

Mar. 18 *The Benesh Movement Notation* by J. and R. Benesh
Apr. 15 *Jugoslav Dances* by M. Zybina

at the English Speaking Union, 37 Charles Street, W.1, at 3 p.m.

Mar. 25 *How to Notate a Ballet* by Ann Hutchinson

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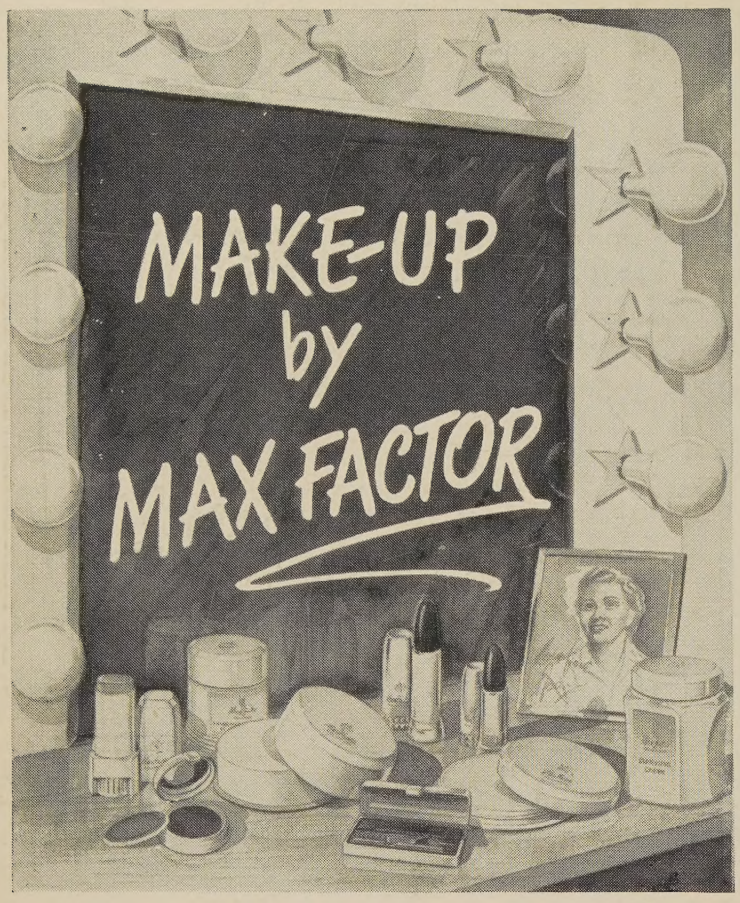

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